School of Theology at Claremont
1001 1331727

CHRISTIAN COUNSEL

"Here is the sort of book we want on this greatest of all subjects."—*Times.*

Eighth Edition. Price **10/6** net.

The Days of His Flesh

The Earthly Life of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

By the

REV. PROF. DAVID SMITH, M.A., D.D.

"There is no Life of Christ in which the whole Gospel narrative is reproduced in so readable and intelligent a form."—*The late Dr. Marcus Dods.*

"For here, be it noted, is a sound scholar who can write for a wide public, and at the same time a popular writer who never forgets the restraint that is a sure sign of scholarship."—*Outlook.*

"We have been more than charmed with a perusal of this beautiful book. . . . A treasure-house of Christian thought and teaching."—*Church Family Newspaper.*

WORKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR

MAN'S NEED OF GOD, AND OTHER SERMONS, 6*s.*

THE PILGRIM'S HOSPICE, 3*s.* 6*d.*

A LEGEND OF JERUSALEM, 1*s.* net.
Illustrated in Colour.

A LEGEND OF BETHLEHEM, 1*s.* net.
Illustrated in Colour.

HODDER & STOUGHTON, WARWICK SQUARE, LONDON E.

CHRISTIAN COUNSEL

BY THE REV.

DAVID SMITH, M.A., D.D.

Professor of Theology in Magee College, Londonderry

AUTHOR OF "THE DAYS OF HIS FLESH," "MAN'S NEED OF GOD," ETC.

HODDER AND STOUGHTON

LONDON NEW YORK TORONTO

Theology Library
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
AT CLAREMONT
California

RICHARD CLAY & SONS, LIMITED,
BRUNSWICK STREET, STAMFORD STREET, S.E.
AND BUNGAY, SUFFOLK

TO

MY FIRST CHARGE,

THE UNITED FREE CHURCH CONGREGATION OF THE PARISH OF TULLIALLAN, WHERE THIS CORRESPONDENCE WAS BEGUN

School of Theology
at Claremont

A11865

PREFACE

It has been my privilege during the last five years to engage, through *The British Weekly*, in a correspondence which I have come to recognise as not the least of my offices as a minister of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It has been more difficult and exacting than it may perhaps appear. The letters which I answer publicly from week to week are but an insignificant percentage of those which I receive. Too many perforce go unacknowledged; but there are others, sadly numerous, which it were cruel to ignore, yet which it is impossible to deal with openly—stories of sin and shame and suffering which are unfolded to me as in the secrecy of the Confessional; and these I answer privately, humbly depending on the direction which our Master never withholds from the least of His servants in the execution of His charges, and earnestly coveting to be found faithful to my trust after the manner of St. Ambrose of Milan: *Videbatur enim sibi cum jacente jacere. Causas autem criminum quæ illi confitebatur, nulli nisi Domino soli, apud quem intercedebat, loquebatur; bonum relinquens exemplum posteris sacerdotibus, ut intercessores apud Deum magis sint quam accusatores apud homines.*

Amid much weakness and insufficiency I have continually set before me as my twofold aim the honour of our Lord and the profit of my far-spread congregation—the multitude of my readers in every continent and island, whose faces I have never seen, but whose gracious messages from time to time have brought them very near me and given me the gladness of knowing that my ministry is not unavailing.

It is in response to frequent requests that I have prepared this volume. It is a selection of letters from my weekly correspondence, and they are reproduced practically as they were written, except that I have occasionally run two kindred letters into one. I have been accustomed, where space permitted, to imitate the practice of Seneca, who closed each of his epistles with a quotation—some profitable thought which he had encountered in the course of his reading. It may seem a pedantry, but I fancy it, and I have retained it here.

I have to thank my sisters for their assistance, especially in the work of indexing.

D. S.

4 *The College, Londonderry.*

CONTENTS

GOD

		PAGE
I	THE REALISATION OF GOD	3
II	CONCEIVING OF GOD.	7
III	THE BLESSED TRINITY	11
IV	THE HOLY SPIRIT	16

THE CHURCH

V	THE HARBOUR OF THE SAINTS	23
VI	THE BOUNDARIES OF THE CHURCH	27
VII	SPIRITUAL INDEPENDENCE	31

THE LORD'S SUPPER

VIII	ITS PERPETUAL OBLIGATION	37
IX	ITS CELEBRATION	41
X	THE SACRAMENTAL CUP	45

THE LORD'S DAY

XI	THE INSTITUTION	53
XII	ITS OBSERVANCE	57

THE HOLY MINISTRY

		PAGE
XIII	QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE SACRED OFFICE	63
XIV	SERMON-PREPARATION	67
XV	SERMON-DELIVERY	71
XVI	"LECTURING"	75
XVII	AIDS TO PULPIT-PRAYER	79
XVIII	PREPARATION OF PULPIT-PRAYER	83
XIX	SICK VISITATION	87
XX	PASTORAL VISITATION	90
XXI	READING	94
XXII	ATTUNING THE HEART	98
XXIII	DISCOURAGEMENT	102
XXIV	CLERICAL DEPORTMENT	106
XXV	"JESTING WHICH IS NOT CONVENIENT"	109
XXVI	PLAGIARISM	113
XXVII	RAILERS AT THE MINISTRY	117

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

XXVIII	THE TRUTH OF THE BIBLE	123
XXIX	THE ULTIMATE AUTHORITY	127
XXX	PROBLEM OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL	131
XXXI	APPROPRIATION OF THE PROMISES	135
XXXII	THE DOUBLE REFERENCE OF PROPHECY	139

THE WORK OF GRACE

PAGE

XXXIII THE ATONEMENT 145

XXXIV THE DERELICTION 149

XXXV CONVERSION 153

XXXVI A SENSE OF GUILT 157

XXXVII THE CONFESSIONAL 161

XXXVIII SINS OF IGNORANCE 165

XXXIX THE TRANSFIGURATION OF THE CURSE . . . 169

XL PREDESTINATION 173

DOUBT

XLI CHRIST AND DOUBT 179

XLII THE ECLIPSE OF FAITH 182

XLIII THE PARTING OF THE WAYS 185

XLIV FAITH AND KNOWLEDGE 189

XLV NATURE AND THE CURSE 192

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

XLVI THE OBJECTIVE EFFICACY OF PRAYER 199

XLVII THE APPOINTED TASK 203

XLVIII WRONGED AND WRONG-DOER 207

XLIX JEALOUSY 211

L CRANKS 215

LI ANONYMOUS LETTERS 219

LII IMMORTALITY 223

INDEX I—SUBJECTS AND NAMES 229

,, II—PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE 235

MY RETREATS

I BLESS Thee, Lord, that, when my life
Is as a troubled sea,
I have, remote from its rough strife,
Harbours to shelter me.

I bless Thee for my home, where Love
Her sweet song ever sings,
And Peace spreads, like a nesting dove,
Her gentle, brooding wings.

And for this chamber of desire
Where my dear books abide,
My constant friends that never tire,
The cares that never chide.

But chiefly for the Mercy-seat,
Where every weary load
I lay down at Thy gracious feet,
Jesus, my King, my God.

GOD

I.—THE REALISATION OF GOD

Perplexed.—"My perplexity lies in my being unable to hold communion with God, to feel that there is a person who listens and hears my prayers. I would like to feel the immediate presence of God."

Yes, this is very essential. "I hope," says Erskine of Linlathen, "you know what it is to be sensible of the presence of God. Religion seems to me to consist in that."

And I think the reason why we so often fail here is simply that God is so very near us and so constantly near us that we do not recognise Him, and keep longing for some special and extraordinary manifestation —if not a voice from Heaven, then an inward ecstasy of peace and joy. The word for us is: "Be still, and know that I am God." Pythagoras had a theory that the heavenly bodies make ceaseless music in their rhythmic course across the firmament; and when he was asked why we do not hear it, he answered that we are so accustomed to it that we never notice it. We would hear "the music of the spheres" if we would be still, and put the noise of the world out of our ears and its distractions out of our hearts.

God is ever near us. Each breath we draw is His inspiration; and if He stayed His ministration for a moment, we would perish outright. It is the con-

stancy of His presence that blinds us to it. This truth is quaintly taught in the Rabbinical commentary on Exodus xvii. 7, 8: "The children of Israel tempted the Lord, saying, Is the Lord among us, or not? Then came Amalek and fought against Israel." "This matter," says the commentator, "may be likened to a parable of a child who is riding on his father's shoulders, and, on meeting a friend of his father's, calls out: 'Have you seen my father anywhere?' Then his father saith unto him: 'Thou art riding on my shoulders, and thou askest questions about me. I will put thee down for a moment in the presence of the enemy, so as to teach thee what my absence would mean.'" If we would only be still and consider, we would recognise God in every common thing and feel the touch of His hand in every experience.

1. That we may recognise Him, it is needful that we should have a true conception of Him. Aristotle defines God as "thought, the thought of thought," but this is too unpractical. We need more than a philosophical abstraction; we need a mental image. And Jesus has furnished this. He was "the visible image of the invisible God," and we believe in God through Him. When we would think of God, let us think of Jesus; and then we shall have an adequate form of thought, a tangible and satisfying conception.

2. We need not implore His presence. It is ever with us, and we should recognise it and realise it. Look within, and you find God there. He is in our hearts. Conscience is His voice, and if we hearken to it, it speaks ever clearer. And every holy thought, every upward aspiration, every sorrow for failure, every sense of shortcoming is an operation of His Spirit. Interpret your own experience. Your longing

for the presence of God is an evidence of His presence; it is the grasp of His hand drawing you to Himself. The Old Testament teaches all this in a peculiarly impressive fashion. The Hebrew mind knew nothing of "secondary causes." Whatever befell, it recognised as an immediate act of God. Hence that ever-recurring phrase: "The Lord said unto me." It does not mean that God actually appeared and spoke, which would imply that He was nearer to the children of men in the Jewish dispensation than in the Christian. The message came along a natural channel, and all the difference is that it was recognised as proceeding from God. He spoke to the prophets, even as He speaks to men in every generation, in conscience, experience, and history.

Again, as the Psalmist perceived (cf. Ps. xix.), Nature is a revelation of God, glittering with His presence to every one who has the seeing eye and the understanding heart—

> "A presence that disturbs me with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man."

One feels this among the solitudes of the Highland mountains, so solemn and wild and silent. One understands there how it is that men have dreamed dreams and seen visions of God in the desert. The desert is "that most wonderful thing in nature—*God without man*"; and was it not there that God appeared to Moses in the bush, *ardens sed virens?* Was it not on the scarred summit of Mount Sinai that Moses saw God and heard the Law? Was it not in the wilderness that John the Baptist received his revelation, and—if

I may say it without irreverence—that our Lord encountered the Tempter and "first laid down the rudiments of His great warfare"? Amid such scenes an apparition would be no surprise: it is almost a surprise when there is none. A Highlander must needs be a mystic. It is the supernatural that is real to him, and the natural that he has difficulty in recognizing.

My quotation to-day is from the *Religio Medici:* "There are two books from which I collect my Divinity: beside the written one of God, another of his servant Nature, that universal and public manuscript, that lies express'd unto the eyes of all; those that never saw Him in the one have discovered Him in the other."

II.—CONCEIVING OF GOD

Wistful.—"Is it possible to form in one's imagination an objective focus of Christ, as it were, or must we pray as if into the open air? A distinct personality is such a more directly satisfactory appeal that I do not wonder at Catholics having images or pictures. To be told that God is around us and everywhere is not definite enough, and I wonder if I have not yet known the personal presence of God as He may be known, although I am an old woman."

Inquirer.—"I admit the necessity of postulating a Primal Cause of all things, but I find it difficult to worship and pray to a mysterious something of which I have no definite conception. How am I to pray to a Being of whom I have no mental image?"

T. G. J.—"A few young men met together the other day, and a discussion arose as to how far the imagination can be legitimately used in prayer with regard to the historical Person of Jesus. When we ask all things in and through His name, some find it helpful to summon up before the mind's eye His human and bodily form (imaginary). Different opinions were expressed, and we separated without coming to one and the same opinion."

The Incarnation was God's response to this desire, His satisfaction of this need of the human soul. Men were wondering and guessing and dreaming about

Him; and in the person of Jesus of Nazareth He took their nature and lived His divine life before their eyes. "Philip saith unto Him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and hast thou not recognised Me, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father: how sayest thou, Shew us the Father?"

> "So, through the thunder comes a human voice,
> Saying, O heart I made, a heart beats here!
> Face, my hands fashioned, see it in myself!
> Thou hast no power nor mayest conceive of mine,
> But love I gave thee, with myself to love,
> And thou must love me who have died for thee!"

Jesus in the days of His flesh was Immanuel, "God with us," and His disciples saw God in Him; and when He went away, the memory of Him remained, and it was their image of God.

But how does this help us? We have never seen Jesus, and it is very remarkable that, much as they have told us about Him, the Evangelists have hidden from us what manner of person He was in outward aspect—whether great or little in stature, dark or fair, comely or uncomely. And I think the reason is that the Resurrection transfigured His image in their minds. He showed Himself to them alive after His Passion in "the body of His glory" which He carried home to the Father's House and is wearing now; and the vision thrust "the body of His humiliation" from their remembrance. They had known Him after the flesh, but thenceforth they would know Him so no more (2 Cor. v. 16). And the Saviour whom they commend to our faith is not the Man of Sorrows who trod for a season the homeless ways of Palestine, but the Living Lord who reigns evermore in His glory and manifests Himself in His grace to believing souls.

It may be that our craving for a mental image is an evidence of our spiritual incapacity; nevertheless it is inevitable so long as we are in the flesh. It is impossible for you to think of anything which you have never seen without an ideal picture of it rising before you. You never saw Troy, yet you cannot read the *Iliad* without beholding in imagination an old-world town with ramparts and palaces. You never saw Socrates, yet, whenever you think of him, there rises before you a picture of the philosopher and his attendant disciples in the portico or prison-house of Athens. And when you think of Jesus, you behold a mental image of Him too—a projection of the impression produced upon your mind by your knowledge of the Gospel-story and your personal experience of His grace.

Thus, it seems to me, the exercise of the imagination with regard to the historical Person of our Lord is not merely legitimate but inevitable, and whatever quickens and ennobles the imagination is a true aid to devotion, if not to faith. This is the use of the ideal portraitures of Jesus which the great masters have wrought with chisel or brush, and it were well if there were one in every home. An artist once presented an Oxford undergraduate with an engraving of Hoffmann's "Christ." "Hang this in your room," he said, "and it will banish the ballet-girls and jockeys." One Sunday night toward the close of his suffering life F. W. Robertson took with him when he went to rest his "Leonardo"—a copy of that exquisite "Face of Jesus" which hangs in the Cathedral of Antwerp, and which manifestly owes its inspiration to the description of His human aspect in the apocryphal Epistle of Lentulus. "The next morning," he says, "I awoke

tired, and felt inclined to dawdle away my time in bed; but that calm, dignified look, bent down from my mantelpiece, absolutely rebuked me, and made it impossible." I have a marble miniature of Thorwaldsen's "Come unto Me," and I kept it before me all the time I was writing *The Days of His Flesh*. The sight of it was an unfailing inspiration: it was like the visible presence of the Master.

I find that, when I think of Jesus, it is generally that Face and that Form which make my mental image. But there is another and a truer suggestion. A dear old saint was talking to me lately of the minister who long ago led her to Jesus, and she spoke of his beautiful face, so sweet and gracious. "I always thought," she said, "it was the sort of face our Saviour would have." And this is the truest of all pictures of Christ—a human face which reflects a Christlike spirit.

Of course one's mental image of Jesus is only a dream-face; but suppose He should appear in our midst, unheralded, unannounced: I wonder if there be any lover of Him who would not instantly recognise Him. I hardly think it. And one thing I am sure of—that we do not need to have seen Jesus in order that we may love Him. And to my mind the chief allurement of Heaven is the prospect of discovering Jesus, of beholding at length that dear Face which is our dream and our desire.

My quotation to-day is from Jeremy Taylor: "The life of Jesus is not described to be like a picture in a chamber of pleasure, only for beauty, and entertainment of the eye; but like the Egyptian hieroglyphics, whose every feature is a precept."

III.—THE BLESSED TRINITY

Manchester.—"I believe in a Heavenly Father who is the essence and inspiration of purity, holiness, and love; but the Trinity does not appeal to my reason, and I feel no desire to know Christ as my Saviour. I am open to conviction, but cannot accept the Scripture as proof that He is the Son of God. The Bible is only inspired to me as its truths are confirmed by my conscience and experience."

The word "Trinity" occurs nowhere in the Holy Scriptures. It first occurs as a theological term in the writings of Theophilus of Antioch (2nd c.), and it came into general use during the early controversies on the Person of our Lord; and, I believe, it conveniently and accurately defines the distinctively Christian conception of God according to the teaching of the New Testament—the conception of an essential and eternal differentiation within the Divine Nature. And such a conception seems to me inevitable: if we are to think of God at all, it must be after this manner.

1. It is a postulate of His eternal self-consciousness. Let your imagination loose for a little. Go back in thought to a point anterior to Creation, ere the word had been spoken which summoned the Universe into being. What existed then? Neither man nor angel,

no sun or moon or star, not even a primordial atom; nothing in all the limitless expanse of infinite space save God alone, pure, solitary, companionless Deity.

But what manner of Deity? The condition of consciousness is an external world. All knowledge comes by way of contrast. You know darkness by contrast with light, pain by contrast with pleasure, evil by contrast with good. And you know yourself only by contrast with something other than yourself. You were born with all your faculties, but you remained "an unconscious babe" until you, as it were, found your bearings; and it was only when you realised your surroundings that you realised yourself. That was the dawn of your self-consciousness; and your "earliest recollection" is simply the first memorable appeal which the external world made to your faculties. If there were no external world, your faculties would have remained unquickened, and your consciousness would still be dormant.

Carry this principle back to your position anterior to Creation, and what do you find? If the Divine Nature be a simple unity, God was then nothing more than a blind force, an unconscious spirit transfusing space; nor was it until, by no creative purpose but by some involuntary process of emanation, something external to Him and distinct from Him came into being that He discovered Himself and awoke to consciousness.

A monistic theology thus runs back to Pantheism. But in view of such an essential differentiation as the doctrine of the Trinity expresses, it appears dimly how it is possible for God to be the Eternal Wisdom, knowing Himself from everlasting in Another who is yet not Another but Himself. "Is it possible for us,"

says Martensen, "not merely to imagine to ourselves, but to think, that God could have been from Eternity conscious of Himself as a Father, if He had not from Eternity distinguished Himself from Himself as the Son, and if He had not been as eternally one with the Son in the unity of the Spirit? Or, in other words, is it possible to conceive of God as eternal self-consciousness without conceiving Him as eternally *making Himself His own object?*"

2. It is a condition of the eternal moral and spiritual perfection of God. A solitary life is necessarily poor and incomplete. Think of a castaway on a desert island. What is the misery of his situation? It is not that he is in danger or want. There is no enemy, no savage, no fierce beast to set upon him and hurt him; and Nature lavishes her bounties upon him: every tree sheds its luscious fruits at his feet. There is nothing to affright him, and he lacks no physical necessity; yet he is wretched. For he is alone, and therefore he is shut out from love and service. The highest life is impossible to him.

And so with God. Push back in imagination behind Creation, and—supposing the possibility of self-consciousness—what manner of life did God lead then, on the monistic theory? He was solitary, companionless; He was the God of the Stoics, whose attributes were such as these: "self-existent," "self-centred," "self-contained," "self-absorbed," "self-sufficing," "self-complacent." His life was loveless, and therefore undivine.

> "For the loving worm within its clod,
> Were diviner than a loveless god
> Amid his worlds, I will dare to say."

There was no opportunity in the divine life for the

highest and holiest moral functions—love, self-devotion, self-forgetfulness, self-sacrifice. There might indeed be a disposition thereto, but so long as there was no object on which to lavish them, they must remain unexercised, and God must continue in empty and hungry-hearted incompleteness until, through stress of longing, He created something to love and bless. The world would then, as Philo asserted, be necessary to God. "Were it to perish, God would, from want of occupation and terrible inactivity, lead a life not worth living. Nay, if it were lawful to say so, the consequence of perfect solitude would be death for God."

Thus the ultimate issue of a monistic theology is not Pantheism, but rather Atheism; for "God is Love," and where there is no Love, there is no God. "If," says R. H. Hutton, "we are to believe that *the Father* was from all time, we must believe that He was *as* a Father—that is, that love was actual in Him as well as potential, that the communication of life and thought and the fulness of joy was of the inmost nature of God, and never began to be, if God never began to be."

3. It is significant in this connection that the higher we ascend the scale of life, we find an ever richer and more varied organisation. Think of the *moneron*, the lowest known animal, "an extremely minute, shapeless, colourless, slimy mass, alike all over, and therefore without any organs"; and then think of man, so infinitely complex, so richly and variously organised. Think of the savage state, where men live in fierce isolation without co-operation or alliance; and then consider how civilisation bands them in ever widening societies—the family, the tribe, the nation, the

empire—with common interests and mutual duties. As life advances toward perfection, the tendency is to ever fuller organisation. The ideal is not unity but infinite diversity in unity. And, according to the Christian conception, the Supreme Life is not a simple unity but a trinity in unity. "Why," asks Romanes, "stumble *a priori* over the doctrine of the Trinity—especially as man himself is a triune being, of body, mind (*i. e.* reason), and spirit (*i. e.* moral, æsthetic, religious faculties)?"

The reason why you think you have no desire to know Christ as your Saviour is that you give salvation too narrow a definition. It is no mere affair of Sin and Atonement. It is the deliverance of a man from whatsoever holds him down and frustrates his upward yearning; and every man to whom the Ideal has beckoned, is desiring Christ as his Saviour—consciously or unconsciously.

My quotation to-day is a saying of Leonardo da Vinci: "Where there is most feeling, there is most martyrdom."

IV.—THE HOLY SPIRIT

I am pleased that my last letter has proved helpful, and I gladly accede to a widespread and earnest desire that I should say something about the Person and Office of the Holy Spirit. I would refer my readers to Martensen's *Christian Dogmatics*, §§ 52–58, 181–184; Bushnell's *Vicarious Sacrifice*, Part I., chap. iii.; Whittier's poem, "Trinitas."

1. Since God created man in His own image and manifested Himself, in the person of our Lord, under human conditions, it follows that God and man are akin; and whatever is excellent in human nature is a dim, far-off reflection of the perfect excellence of the divine. Thus has our Lord taught us to reason. "If ye," He says, "being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in Heaven give good things to them that ask Him?" (St. Matt. vii. 11).

Now there are three relationships in the domain of human life—fatherhood, motherhood, and brotherhood; and the first and third have their heavenly counterparts: God is our Father, Jesus our Elder Brother. But what of the second? Is this, the tenderest and sweetest element in human nature, lacking in the divine? Nay, it too has its heavenly counterpart. A certain preacher used to pray, in the fervour

of his somewhat exuberant devotion: "O God, our Father which art in Heaven; O Jesus, the Eternal Son, our Elder Brother; O Blessed Spirit, our Mother which art in Heaven." And there is here a profound truth. The Holy Spirit represents the element of motherhood in the divine nature. Is it not written (Gen. i. 2, R.V. marg.): "The Spirit of God was brooding upon the waters," according to the Rabbinical comment, "like a dove hovering over her young"? And thus the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is the supreme discovery of God. It reveals the inmost tenderness of that great Heart which yearns over the children of men with more than a father's, more than a brother's love. For what love is comparable to a mother's? One of the Jewish Rabbis, hearing his mother's footsteps, rose and said: "The Majesty of the Eternal draweth nigh." And the divine mother-love is higher than the human as the heavens are higher than the earth (cf. Isa. xlix. 15).

2. In the literature of devotion the Holy Spirit is frequently styled "the Paraclete." The name is nowhere found in our English version of the Bible, yet it is Scriptural, being a transliteration of the Greek word which is rendered "Comforter" in St. John's Gospel (xiv. 16, 26; xv. 26; xvi. 7) and "Advocate" in his First Epistle (ii. 1); and, understanding that the latter is the right rendering, we discover a wealth of profound truth in these passages.

In the days of His flesh Jesus was God's Advocate with men. He told the Eleven in the Upper Room that, though He was going away, God would not be left without an Advocate on the earth to plead His cause and win men to faith. "He shall give you another Advocate, that He may abide with you for

ever, even the Spirit of Truth" (St. John xiv. 16, 17). The Holy Spirit has come in the room of Jesus, and still from age to age performs the office of God's Advocate with men. Nor has the advocacy of Jesus ceased. He is our Advocate up in Heaven pleading our cause with God (1 John ii. 1).

The history of Redemption is thus a progressive economy of grace: (1) the Old Testament dispensation, when God was conceived as remote in high Heaven; (2) that of the Incarnation, when He revealed Himself as a Father and, by the advocacy of His Eternal Son, made His appeal to the children of men; (3) that of the Holy Spirit, under which it is our privilege to live in the enjoyment of a double advocacy —our Glorified Redeemer's who "maketh intercession for us" (Rom. viii. 34) in the Court of Heaven (cf. Christina Rossetti's verses, "Day and night the Accuser"), and the Holy Spirit's down here, wooing us to faith by His gracious importunities.

And it is not only believers who are thus assailed.

> "The white wings of the Holy Ghost
> Stoop, seen or unseen, o'er the heads of all."

Conscience is His witness; the call of duty is His voice; self-loathing, discontentment with the low things of earth, the upward yearning which visits all, even the worst—these are His stirrings in the soul, awakening her to her heavenly possibilities. There is nothing gentle or beautiful or heroic on the earth but by His inspiration. "Nothing good among men," said Origen, "comes into being without God." And St. Justin Martyr spoke of "a seminal divine Word" in the heart of heathendom whence the philosophers derived their wisdom and the poets their

music. Truly the borders of light are wider than they seem, and Heaven is nearer than we think. "It isn't for men to make channels for God's Spirit, as they make channels for the watercourses, and say, 'Flow here, but flow not there.'"

My quotation to-day is from St. Bernard of Clairvaux: "Prayer is the devotion of the mind, that is, its turning to God by a loving and humble affection —humble from a consciousness of its own infirmity, loving from a consideration of the divine clemency. When we pray, let us call the Holy Spirit unto us."

THE CHURCH

V.—THE HARBOUR OF THE SAINTS

A Constant American Reader of the "B.W."—"Are Christian people justified in giving up all effort to assist organised Church work for the sake of concentration in their daily business? Many find that they must do this to compete with the energy and skill in money-making of those who have all their time for business interests, because they have no Christian or Church interests. What is to become of our churches if business interests absorb all the time of Christian people, and Christians forget the source of their inspiration in the quiet of Sunday worship, and in the good things of Christian work for others on the Lord's Day?"

There is an ancient hymn for use at the dedication of a Church, all in the spirit of this verse, which I would render better if its sweet Latinity were less untranslatable—

> "Health for the ailing, medicine for the weary,
> Light for the blind, and pardon for transgressions—
> Here they are brought us; here are fear and sorrow
> Utterly banished."

This is the *raison d'être* of the Church. She is a house of prayer, a place of healing, a haven of rest. She stands for the peace of God in the midst of a weary, troubled, sinful world. Her atmosphere is

sweet and still, and when we enter her, we breathe the air of Eternity. It is a priceless blessing that there should be such a harbour in a world like this; and wherever it is found, it will be largely frequented; for the troubled children of men long for rest, for healing, for escape, however brief, from the noise and dust of the crowded highway.

Such is the ideal of the Church; but I fear it has been lost sight of in these days, and hence all the difficulty which you feel. We have forgotten what the Church is—not a propaganda, but the communion of believing and worshipping souls, living a supernatural life in the midst of the world, and thus, by their simple presence, extending the borders of the Kingdom of Heaven, as the leaven permeates the mass, as the lamp illumines the darkness, as the spring of living water makes the desert rejoice and blossom as the rose. It is for lack of the spirit of devotion that the Church is failing; and instead of recognising this and returning to the primal simplicities of faith and communion, we have got hysterical and resorted to a multitude of sensational devices which, as we are finding, only aggravate the evil by more thoroughly secularising the Church. Think of all our elaborate machinery, ever in motion, and, if the truth be confessed, accomplishing so little. The Church in these days is not a "harbour of the saints," "a refuge from the storm, a covert from the tempest." She is seething with fretful and feverish activities. The cloister has been turned into a committee-room; the man of God has yielded place to the man of affairs, the saint to the ecclesiastic.

My experience is that our business men are glad to bear a part in the legitimate service of the House of

God, as office-bearers or Sunday-school teachers, and find in such ministration refreshment and inspiration; but is it fair to lay upon men weary with their daily and necessary avocations the burden of an elaborate organisation, and accuse them of absorption in worldly business if they shirk it? Our extravagant multiplication of agencies is making Church membership impossible precisely for those who need it most; and the reason why they are forsaking it is that they do not find "the source of their inspiration in the quiet of Sunday worship."

When I hear the clamour for more workers, I remember that our Lord was content with very few. "He ordained twelve, that they should be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach." Others would fain have enlisted, but He had another use for them. "Go home to thy friends," He would say, "and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee." And this is a high and sacred and essential ministry. "No man," says Jeremy Taylor, "needs to complain of want of power or opportunities for religious perfections: a devout woman in her closet, praying with much zeal and affection for the conversion of souls, is in the same order to a 'shining like the stars in glory,' as he who by excellent discourses puts it into a more forward disposition to be actually performed." Our need is not more preachers, but more gentle, gracious souls to live for Jesus and carry the atmosphere of the House of Prayer into the dust and tumult of the market-place. You remember how it was that Tillietudlem Castle stood the siege: there was a well in the courtyard which never ran dry. And what the Church needs is a well within—more

faith, more waiting upon God, and more of the quietness and confidence which are born of communion with the Living Lord.

My quotation to-day is from St. Irenæus: "Where the Church is, there is also the Spirit of God; and where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church and all grace."

VI.—THE BOUNDARIES OF THE CHURCH

G. H. M. (New Zealand).—"A minister said here lately that he welcomed all sorts to his church, and never asked what they believed, so long as the life was right. Is that Christianity?"

A. B. (Lausanne).—"Is love for the neighbour equivalent to love for God? We are often told, and we read in even evangelical reviews, that an atheist may be as well a religious man as any real pious Christian; that, believing in good and doing good, in fact he believes in God without knowing of it."

A. G.—"Do you think that, if people live good lives, and yet are not converted, they will be cast into a lake of fire to be burned for ever and ever?"

This is a problem which presented itself with peculiar urgency in the early days of Christianity, when the Church had to define her attitude toward ethnic religion, philosophy, and literature. Some of the Fathers regarded the ancient deities as demons, and, unable to deny the beauty and truth of much of the teaching of the old philosophers, alleged that such elements had been borrowed from the Old Testament Scriptures. But there were others who took a larger and juster view, and taught that there was no spot of earth which had ever lacked the presence and operation of the Holy Spirit. St. Justin Martyr spoke

of a "seminal Word" in the human soul ere ever the Word was made flesh, and from this seed sprang the ancient world's rich harvest of wisdom and goodness. Christ was the Light of the World ere ever He appeared. And Clement of Alexandria, loving the Greek thought and literature, which had done so much for him, though it had failed to satisfy his deepest need, formulated a large and generous doctrine. Precisely as their Law had been for the Jews a schoolmaster to bring them to Christ, so had their philosophy been for the Greeks. The history not only of Israel but of the world had been a preparation for the Saviour, an unconscious yearning after Him who is the Desire of all Nations.

But is there Scriptural authority for this? Remember our Lord's picture of the Last Judgment (St. Matt. xxv. 31–46), "when the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and before Him shall be gathered all the nations," *i. e.* in Scriptural phraseology, the heathen who have never heard the Gospel (see *The Days of His Flesh,* pp. 429 ff.). None of them knew Him, and they were set on the right hand or on the left according as they had comported themselves to their needy fellow-creatures. What they had done to these He takes as done to Himself.

Here we have the doctrine which St. John proclaims with such emphasis in his First Epistle, that love is the whole of religion—love for God manifesting itself in love for man, and love for man inspired by the love wherewith the Father has loved all His children. And Jesus says that those who are ignorant of God, yet love their fellows, are unconsciously loving God, and if they knew Him, they would love Him too. The principle is that men will be judged and sen-

tenced according to their opportunities, and they will receive the highest commendation who have been most faithful to the light which they enjoyed. No one will be condemned for not believing in a Saviour of whom he never heard. Pythagoras and Socrates, no less than Abraham and Moses, will sit down with St. John and St. Paul in the Kingdom of Heaven.

And the principle has a further application. There are earnest men in our day who are hostile, as they suppose, to Christianity. In truth, however, it is not Christianity that they reject, but a caricature of it. It has been presented to them, perhaps in their childhood, in a perverted and unlovely form, and their hearts have revolted from it. You know what barbarities were perpetrated on the American Indians by their Spanish conquerors. There is an instructive story of an Indian who had been tied to the stake and was being importuned by a Franciscan friar, crucifix in hand, to turn Christian, and then he would go to Heaven. "Are there any Spaniards in Heaven?" he asked. "Certainly," answered the friar, "it is full of them." "Then," said the victim, "I had rather go to Hell than have any more of their company."

And this sort of thing is always happening. Of course it is unfair to judge of Christianity by its professors, yet there is no other way. Jesus appointed it. "Ye shall be My witnesses," He said to His disciples on the eve of His departure, and it was the most generous word He ever spoke. He deliberately entrusted them with the keeping of His good name, and the cause which was dearer to Him than life. "Stand in My room," He said; "be My representatives; as I have been, so be you in the world, that when I am far away, the world may have an image of Me

before its eyes." And there is no stumbling-block to faith comparable to an un-Christlike Christian. He is a false witness, and it is no wonder though men say, "If that be Christianity, I will have nothing to do with it." And I rather think that their unbelief will be counted to them for righteousness.

My quotation to-day is from Clement of Alexandria: "The sick need one to make them whole, the wandered one to guide them, the blind one to lead them, the thirsty the living fountain whereof they that partake shall thirst no more; the dead are in need of life, the sheep of the shepherd, and the children of the teacher; but all mankind needs Jesus."

VII.—SPIRITUAL INDEPENDENCE

J. B. R.—"According to Eph. v. 23, i. 22; Ps. xxii. 28, Christ is 'the Head of the Church,' 'Head over all things to the Church,' 'Governor among the nations'; and according to Parliamentary Oaths Act, 1866, our Sovereign is supreme 'in all matters civil and ecclesiastical within this realm and others His Majesty's dominions.' Can a Christian be loyal, or consistently so, to Christ the Lord in directly or indirectly swearing the Oath of Allegiance according to our Statute Law?"

You remember the historic scene at Falkland in 1596, when King James would have silenced the Church's testimony, and Andrew Melville plucked him by the sleeve, and, styling him "God's sillie vassal," told him a truth which Scotland has never forgotten. "Sir," he cried, "as divers times before I have told you, so now again I must tell you, there are two kings and two kingdoms in Scotland: there is King James, the head of this commonwealth, and there is Christ Jesus, the King of the Church, whose subject James the Sixth is, and of whose kingdom he is not a king, nor a head, but a member. We will yield to you your place, and give you all due obedience; but again I say, you are not the head of the Church; you cannot give us that eternal life which

we seek for even in this world, and you cannot deprive us of it. Sir, when you were in your swaddling clothes, Christ Jesus reigned freely in this land, in spite of all His enemies."

This is the principle of Spiritual Independence, which has been the sacred cause of all the Scottish contendings since the Reformation, and which at this hour has need of champions in all the three kingdoms. It is pithily expressed in that unwritten saying of our Lord: "My mystery is for Me and the sons of My House"; and it means that while every citizen owes obedience to his secular ruler in secular affairs, Christ is Lord of soul and conscience, and no earthly ruler may usurp authority in that sacred domain. The State's office is the administration of justice and the defence of liberty, and it violates both if it attempts to prescribe what men shall believe or how they shall worship. It has no right to prefer a particular polity or creed, and give it exclusive countenance and maintenance, and denominate it the National Church. This is a double usurpation. (1) It is a usurpation of that inalienable birthright of every man—the right of private judgment; for it means that each man is to believe not as his conscience but as his ruler directs. And (2) it is a usurpation of the Headship of Christ; for it means that it lies with the ruler to determine the people's faith; in other words, the Church is the ruler's creature, and he is its head. This was excellently put by Theodoric the Ostrogoth early in the sixth century. "To pretend," he wrote to Justin I, "to a dominion over the conscience is to usurp the prerogative of God. By the nature of things, the power of sovereigns is confined to political government; they have no right of punishment but

over those who disturb the public peace; the most dangerous heresy is that of a sovereign who separates himself from part of his subjects, because they believe not according to his belief."

Nearly thirteen centuries have elapsed since this was written, and all their happenings have been a loud and often merciless demonstration of its truth. And there was never a generation which had more need to lay the lesson to heart than our own. Our land is vexed by sectarian animosity. The seamless robe of our blessed Lord is rent in fragments. And the cause is patent to every seeing eye. It is nothing else than the unholy alliance between Church and State; and there can never be peace in our land until this is ended—until it is recognised that the State has no jurisdiction in the domain of conscience, and must cease from her long and persistent meddling.

This is the reason why I am a Free Churchman. I cannot read history without perceiving what mischief that unholy and unscriptural alliance has wrought—how it has secularised the Church and distracted the State; and I see the fratricidal warfare still in progress. I have enlarged on this because it furnishes the answer to your question. Yes, that royal claim is a usurpation of the Headship of Christ, and no Christian should consent to it. But how should we protest against it? There is the way which you suggest, and which has been pursued for more than two centuries by a small but heroic community of Scottish Presbyterians—to decline the Oath of Allegiance and hold aloof from the government of the nation. But this is contrary to our Lord's command: "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's." The proper and sufficient protest is the Free Church attitude.

Hold aloof from the Church which accepts the alliance, and to which alone, *ex definitione,* the phrase, "Matters ecclesiastical within this realm," applies.

My quotation to-day is a saying of Alexander Peden, the Scottish Covenanter: "It is wherever a praying young man or woman is at a dykeside in Scotland: that's where the Church is."

THE LORD'S SUPPER

VIII.—ITS PERPETUAL OBLIGATION

P. T. O.—"I feel a difficulty about the obligation to observe the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. I have been informed that Westcott and Hort state that the words, 'This do in remembrance of Me' (St. Luke xxii. 19), form no true part of St. Luke's Gospel. If so, the Holy Spirit did not inspire any of the four Evangelists to put on record that command which for ages has been the authority for observing the ordinance. Is the command through St. Paul (1 Cor. xi. 24, 25) quite satisfactory and adequate?"

The words "which is given . . . shed for you," are printed in Westcott and Hort's text, but enclosed in double brackets, signifying that they are omitted by Western documents. But they certainly belong to the authentic text. Their omission is due to editorial manipulation. The difficulty was that St. Luke seems to differ from St. Matthew and St. Mark in introducing two cups, two distributions of the sacramental wine, one before the distribution of the bread, and the other after it; and the Western scribes essayed to remove the discrepancy in two ways. Some omitted verses 19b, 20; but this only introduced a fresh discrepancy, not only with the other Evangelists, but with St. Paul (1 Cor. xi. 23–26), by inverting the order of the distribution of the elements,

putting the wine first. And so other scribes had recourse to the expedient of transposition, putting verses 17, 18 after verse 19.

There is, however, no necessity for any sort of manipulation. The fact is, as I have shown in *The Days of His Flesh,* pp. 438 ff., that there were several cups in the course of the Paschal celebration. The first was served at the commencement, and this is the cup which St. Luke mentions in verses 17, 18. The Master had eagerly anticipated that farewell meeting with His disciples, and rejoiced when at length they were gathered at the sacred Table. And He began with a glad exclamation and a pathetic announcement: "With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer: for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God." The next feast that He would share with them would be the Marriage-supper of the Lamb, whereof the sacramental Feast was a prophecy. St. Matthew and St. Mark record the touching saying; but St. Luke alone gives it its proper setting in connection with the first Paschal Cup. Then, in a distinct paragraph (verses 19, 20), comes the account of the institution of the Holy Supper at the close of the feast. The passage is thus authentic; and, though St. Matthew and St. Mark omit the command, "This do in remembrance of Me," it is here; and it is also in 1 Cor. xi. 25. And the Pauline account of the institution is highly authoritative. It is derived from the common tradition whence the Synoptists drew their material; and, as a matter of fact, St. Paul wrote earlier than any of them. His narrative is primitive and authentic.

I am not sure, however, that this line of argument

will help you much. Your doubt about the perpetual obligation of the sacred observance shows that you have never caught its spirit or tasted its sweetness; and I fear your question touches a serious defect in our modern Church life. It seems to me that, in our revulsion from magical and priestly interpretations, we have lost the sense of that sacramental efficacy which was so fully recognised by the great Reformers. I am not a ritualist, but I hold that the Sacraments are sacred and solemn mysteries, and should be reverently approached and adoringly administered and received. I have been present at—I cannot say that I participated in—administrations of both Sacraments which appeared to me nothing short of desecration, and which made me understand why it is that so many devout souls in our day are looking wistfully toward the Romish communion. A Sacrament is much more than a bare symbol. What would be the value of the Holy Supper if it were simply a memorial of a divine visitation long ago, and not a pledge and a discovery of the Lord's abiding presence? John Knox called it "a singular medicine for all poor sick creatures, a comfortable help to weak souls"; and he "utterly condemned the vanity of those that affirmed sacraments to be nothing else but bare and naked signs." I fear there are few among us in these days who thus esteem them. The truth is that the Sacraments are the very heart of Christian worship, and their neglect, their perfunctory and slovenly administration, is a sore impoverishment of the Church, and proves how very low the tide of our spiritual life has ebbed. True worship is essentially sacramental, and I warmly sympathise with old Gilbert of Sempringham, the friend of St.

Bernard of Clairvaux, when he says: "All doctrine is suspect with me, and surely despised, which introduces no mention of Christ, which neither renews me with His Sacraments, nor informs me with His precepts, nor inflames me with His promises." We are no true children of the Reformation if we lack the sacramental spirit, and lightly esteem the grace which resides in those blessed ordinances.

My quotation to-day is from Thomas à Kempis: "Blessed is he who offers himself to the Lord for a whole-burnt offering as often as he celebrates or communicates."

IX.—ITS CELEBRATION

Following up my letter of last week, I propose, in response to numerous questions which have been addressed to me of late, to say a little to-day about the celebration of the Holy Communion.

Several esteemed correspondents have asked whether, in my judgment, the sacred ordinance should be observed frequently or at rare intervals. There is considerable local and denominational diversity in this matter, and I am not disposed to lay down any hard and fast rule, holding that each community should regulate its worship with a view to its peculiar conditions and the edification of its members. It seems to me that the Scottish Church in former days erred in the rarity of its celebration. The sacramental seasons were half-yearly and sometimes only yearly. This was far too seldom, and the excuse was the difficulty of assembling a widely scattered population. I fear, however, that it was only an excuse, and the real reason was a reaction against Popish superstition issuing in an unconscious depreciation of the holy ordinance.

There was indeed this advantage in the practice, that it fostered a sense of the uniqueness and transcendence of the occasion. The Communion was a high and solemn feast, and it was preluded by elaborate and extensive preparations. But the dis-

advantage was very great. (1) The practice was a departure from primitive usage, which was *daily communion,* based, as we learn from St. Augustine's exposition of the Sermon on the Mount, on the petition, "Give us this day our daily bread." (2) It is good that the greatness of the occasion should be realised, but then every act of worship is great, and should be sacramental. Cf. Acts ii. 46 (R.V.): "And day by day, continuing stedfastly with one accord in the Temple, and breaking bread at home, they did take their food with gladness and singleness of heart." Hence it appears not merely that there was daily communion in apostolic days, but that every common meal was a sacramental feast. When the table was spread, the head of the household "took bread and blessed it, and brake it," and this made the poor meal a holy communion. There was nothing sacerdotal or magical about the primitive celebration. (3) Its rare observance divorces the communion from common life, making it a remote mystery and not a continual aid, the pilgrim's *viaticum*. "I don't much approve," says Erskine of Linlathen, "of the rarity of the occurrence of this ordinance in most churches, it gives the idea of a greater and lesser degree of holiness; for if we are to be more devout or religious on sacrament Sundays, of course we may be less devout on others." For myself, I desire frequent communion. Whatever more it may be—and it is very much more—the Holy Supper is a commemoration of our Lord, and we cannot remember Him too often.

Ere I leave the subject, let me say a word about the manner and spirit of the celebration. There was a Scottish usage in earlier days which was called "fencing the Table." It has fallen into desuetude;

and rightly so, if it meant, as is commonly supposed, putting a fence round the Table and warning off unworthy communicants. This is indeed most necessary, but it should be done betimes, and it is much too late when the Table is spread and the guests are gathered. And the fact is that the phrase means something quite different. It is borrowed from the old Scots Law. The session of the court was inaugurated by an impressive ceremony: its officer proclaimed whose court it was—the King's, constituted in his name, by his authority, for the transaction of his business; and this was the Fencing of the Court. Here is the formula: "I fence and forbid, in our Sovereign Lord's name and authority, and of the Judges here present, etc., that none presume, or take upon hand, to trouble or molest this court, nor make speech one for another, without leave asked and given, under the pain of the law." I always "fenced the Table" when I was a minister. I told my dear people whose Table it was—not mine, not the Kirk-session's, not the Church's, but Christ's; and I bade welcome to it in His blessed name every one, whatever his condition, who desired Him. I fear our tendency is to put a fence round the Table and shut out the very persons whom Jesus would welcome most heartily. We forget that the Holy Sacrament is one and indeed the chief of the means of grace—not a privilege for the saints, but an aid for poor sinners who feel their sore need, and would fain get near the blessed Saviour. It is told of quaint "Rabbi" Duncan that once, when he was dispensing the Communion, he observed a woman who, he knew, was troubled about her interest in Christ, looking wistfully at the cup and passing it untasted. He stepped

down and put it into her hand. "Take it, woman," he said, "take it. It's for sinners." The Lord's ordinances are not fences, but roads.

My quotation to-day is from Samuel Rutherford: "I know not if this court kept within my soul be fenced in Christ's name."

X.—THE SACRAMENTAL CUP

R. K.—"A custom of individual Communion cups is creeping into some of the Nonconformist Churches, and I am disposed to question the scripturalness of the innovation. From the words of the Gospels and of St. Paul it is natural to think of the cup passing from hand to hand as being an essential part of the symbolism of the Sacrament. It seems to me this departure from catholic custom has been taken very inconsiderately. It has been considered a matter for the individual congregations to decide."

It will perhaps be helpful to you and others if I reproduce an interesting description which St. Justin Martyr, in the former half of the second century, gives of the primitive method of dispensing the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper:

"We salute one another with a kiss after the prayers. Then there is presented to the leader of the brethren bread and a cup of water and wine mixed. And he takes them and sends up praise and glory to the Father of all through the name of the Son and the Holy Spirit, and makes thanksgiving at length for that we have been accounted worthy of these things by Him. And after he has brought the prayers and the thanksgiving to an end, all the people present assent,

saying 'Amen.' Now 'Amen' in the Hebrew tongue signifies 'So may it be!' And after the leader has given thanks and all the people have assented, those who are called among us Deacons give each of those present to partake of the thanksgiving bread and wine and water, and carry some away to those who are not present. And this meat is called among us the Thanksgiving (Eucharist); whereof it is allowable for none other to partake save he that believes the things taught by us to be true, and has washed himself with the washing for the remission of sins and unto regeneration, and lives after the tradition of Christ."

This passage has a bearing on two questions which are vexing the Church in our day:

1. The question of the use of unfermented wine. The Christians followed the practice of the old Jewish Passover, and the Passover wine was the wine in common use. It was both fermented and intoxicating. This seems contrary to the stringent requirement that the worshippers should purge their houses of leaven (*fermentum*) at the approach of the Feast; but the enactment regarded only the bread, and it is indisputable that the wine was fermented. The Talmud lays down elaborate rules with respect to it. It enjoins that the wine should not be pure but mixed with water—"in order to wholesomeness and the avoidance of intoxication." Only, the mixture must be in measure: "it is necessary that there should be in it the flavour and the appearance of wine."

The practical lesson is that the nature of the element is of little moment. The paramount considerations are decency and edification. If there be unseemliness or

danger in the use of ordinary wine, there is the highest authority, no less than the example of our Blessed Lord in the Upper Room, for modifying and qualifying it. I commend these facts to the consideration of the extremists of both orders, who by their reckless assertions turn the Cup of Blessing into a vial of wrath and, in Bacon's language, "bring Downe the Holy Ghost, in stead of the Likenesse of a Dove, in the Shape of a Vulture, or Raven." The unseemly controversy need never be stirred in a congregation. It is the function of the office-bearers to provide a suitable element, and there are wines prepared expressly for use at the Lord's Table.

And I may further remark that total abstinence is a Christian duty, not because the use of strong drink is in itself sinful, else Jesus would not have furnished it to the wedding company at Cana, but because, in existing circumstances, it is dangerous, if not to ourselves, then to others. It is noteworthy that the New Testament's sternest prohibitions of drunkenness are found in epistles to Gentile Churches (cf. Rom. xiii. 13; 1 Cor. v. 11; Gal. v. 21; Eph. v. 18; 1 Thess. v. 7). The explanation is that the Jews were in those days a temperate people; drunkenness was a distinctively Gentile vice (cf. 1 Pet. iv. 3). What was lawful at Cana was unlawful at Corinth.

2. The question of the Individual Cup. The practice at an ancient feast was that there was a mixing-bowl, and it was passed round, and each guest filled his cup from it and drank out of his own cup. It is worth mentioning here that one of the precepts of Pythagoras is: "Pour out libations at the ear"—that is, the handle—"of the cup"; and this is a warning

against profanation of sacred things, since the drinker's lips were never put to the rim at the handle. Of course this is a heathen philosopher's maxim, and I do not quote it as determining the method of administering the Sacrament of the Supper; yet it were well if we shared the philosopher's reverence for the awful sanctities of worship.

It is evident from what I have said that the individual cup approaches more nearly to the primitive usage than the practice which you wrongly designate as "catholic custom." It is only long familiarity that prevents recognition of the odiousness of the common cup. I am sure there is no medical man who would hesitate to condemn it, and there can be few worshippers whom it fails to nauseate. So long as phthisis and kindred diseases are rife, it must be a serious danger. Even if it were sanctioned by "catholic custom," it should be abolished in obedience to the apostolic precept: "Let all things be done decently."

And pray do not take it amiss if I say frankly that I dislike your way of approaching this question. You object to the individual cup as an "innovation" and a "departure from catholic custom." I have much sympathy with people whose affections twine round old usages, and I would not willingly offend even their prejudices; but I have small patience with cranks who stickle for old customs and obstruct every movement. Believe me, this is not godliness. It is rank Pharisaism, and the habit grows upon a man and eats the heart out of him. It makes him sometimes a nuisance and always a laughing-stock. So beware! I love the old ways, but I would make the right use of them; and a way is for walking on, not for stand-

ing still. Be a live man. Be orthodox if you will, but remember there is nothing so dead as dead orthodoxy.

My quotation to-day is from Richard Baxter: "A Man is no more a Christian than he is Heavenly."

THE LORD'S DAY

XI.—THE INSTITUTION

J. G. M.—"I have lately met with some Seventh Day Adventists. They are very argumentative. What they say on the future is easily answered by our Lord's words: 'It is not for you to know the times and the seasons'; but I find it difficult to reply to their accusation of our wilful disobedience to God in changing the day appointed by Him as the Sabbath both at the beginning and as repeated in the Fourth Commandment. Will you be so good as to explain on what ground nearly all Christendom observes the first day of the week, as we find no Scripture warrant for it?"

The institution of one day out of the seven for holy rest is an instance of a principle which obtains in God's providential dealings with mankind all down the course of history, and which has been designated "redemption by sample." Thus, when He would redeem humanity, He chose one family, the nation of Israel, and made it the repository of His grace, the recipient of His special revelation. His design was that the elect people should be a centre of blessing in the world, like a lamp in the darkness, like a well in the desert. Again, that all the dwellings in a community may be blessed, He claims one house for His own—the House of God, the Place of Prayer. So

also He claims a portion of our possessions for sacred uses, and all that we have is consecrated by God's Tithe. Once more, when He would revive the Church and bless the world, He raises up a man and fills him with grace and endows him with the gifts of the Spirit. What great movement has ever lacked its leader? There would have been no Reformation in Germany without Martin Luther, and none in Scotland without John Knox; there would have been no revival in England in the eighteenth century without Wesley.

And so, that all our time may be sanctified and our whole life blessed, He has claimed one day in each week for His own. As Herbert has it,

> "Christ hath took in this piece of ground,
> And made a garden there for those
> Who want herbs for their wound."

When the Saviour came, He transformed everything He touched. He destroyed nothing. His word was: "I came not to destroy but to fulfil." He laid His hand on the ancient institutions and transfigured them. The Sabbath was a Jewish institution, and He transfigured it with the rest. He invested it with a new significance and charged it with a richer grace. And its transfiguration is marked by two external changes.

1. It was transferred from the close of the week to the beginning of it. Hitherto the Day of Rest had been the seventh day of the week in commemoration of the completion of Creation, when God "rested from His labour"; henceforth it was the first day of the week (cf. St. Luke xxiv. 1; St. John xx. 1, 19; Acts xx. 7; 1 Cor. xvi. 2) in commemoration of the completion of the New Creation. It was on the first day of the week that our Lord was raised from the dead, that

He ascended to Heaven (cf. St. Luke xxiv. 1, 13, 50–53), and that He sent the Holy Spirit of Promise, Pentecost falling fifty days after the Passover.

2. It got a new name. It was called no longer "the Sabbath," but either "the First Day of the Week" (cf. the passages already quoted) or "the Lord's Day." In the New Testament the latter name occurs only once (Rev. i. 10), but it is common, indeed it is the recognised term, in the sub-apostolic literature. Thus, in that primitive manual of Church Discipline, *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles,* it is written: "Every Lord's Day assemble and break bread and give thanks after confessing your trespasses, that your sacrifice may be pure. And whosoever has a quarrel with his fellow, let him not meet with you until they be reconciled, that your sacrifice may not be polluted."

I may add that the Lord's Day, according to the Christian institution, has a twofold aspect, a backward and a forward look. (1) It is commemorative of the completion of Redemption—the supreme facts of the Resurrection, the Ascension, and the Advent of the Holy Spirit. And thus it is no accident, but a fitting, though perhaps unconscious, recognition of the true nature of praise, that our Christian hymnology is so largely taken up with the thought of the Risen Lord and the Holy Spirit. There could be no more appropriate commencement of public worship than Watts' "Blest morning, whose first dawning rays." (2) It is prophetic. It carries our thoughts forward to the Eternal Rest, the "Sabbath rest" which "remaineth for the people of God" (Heb. iv. 9, R.V.).

These, then, are the thoughts which our hearts

should cherish each Lord's Day—the Victory over Death, the Comfort of the Blessed Spirit, the Glory of the Father's House. You see, there is no express enactment for the transference of the Day of Rest from the seventh to the first day of the week, but there is abundant Scripture warrant. And the warrant is the practice of the Apostles and the Apostolic Church. The fitness of the change was so obvious that it was made almost instinctively. It required no formal decree, and it was never challenged. The Lord's Day was the Church's day of gladness and praise, and she recognised that it should be the day which had made her glad for evermore.

It is a pity that there should always be people who turn every blessed and gracious ordinance into unholy disputation. I suppose it is inevitable so long as human nature is what it is; but I wish you and others like you would treat them as they deserve. Recognise it as a rule that argumentative people, whatever their pretensions, are constitutionally irreligious. Never reason with them. They are impervious to reason, and you will simply gratify their humour and vex your own heart. Have as little as possible to do with them; and when you are thrown in their way, let them talk and pay no heed. Religion is not for arguing about: it is for enjoying. Accept the precious ordinances of the Gospel; use them lovingly and believingly, and get the comfort and sweetness out of them.

My quotation to-day is from William Penn: "A Devout Man is one thing, a Stickler is quite another. To be furious in Religion, is to be Irreligiously Religious. It were better to be of no Church, than to be bitter for any."

XII.—ITS OBSERVANCE

Rogantes.—"We are students in a College Hall of Residence, and find great diversity of opinion as to the way of spending the Sabbath. Some think that Sunday ought to be devoted entirely to attending religious services and reading religious books; others that they may do whatever they choose in the form of recreation or rest; a small minority work at their College subjects just as on any other day; some, again, read English literature or good novels, whereas they would not think of studying Latin or mathematics. It seems to us that those who spend Sunday in working or reading are no worse than those who spend it in light conversation or in visiting their friends."

Probably they are better. "It is better," says Jeremy Taylor, "to plough upon holy days than to do nothing or to do viciously." It is easy to enunciate general principles, but their application to particular cases is always difficult. So I shall simply ask your attention to some broad considerations, and leave you to determine your action in the light of these.

1. The Sabbath is a humane institution. It is not a tribute which God exacts, but a gift which He has bestowed on the children of men, and which He would have us value and use wisely and effectively. Its purpose is twofold: (1) that man and beast may rest

from their labour and repair their wasted energies; (2) that men, the immortal children of God, may cease from worldly distractions and get their heads into Eternity lest they be overwhelmed. We are pilgrims and strangers on the earth, travelling across the wide wilderness to the City of God, and the Sabbath is as a well in the desert where we may drink and replenish our water-bottles. There is no necessity for demonstrating our need of this refreshment and reinforcement. Without it our lives would soon get arid and sordid. "Left to ourselves," says Thomas à Kempis, "we sink and perish; visited, we lift up our heads and live." The Sabbath is our Day of Visitation, when the din ceases and the mist opens, and we see the blue sky and hear the angels singing; and it is good for us to pause and be still and hear the music of Eternity. And this is the use of the Sabbath.

2. Here, then, is the rule: *Use the Sabbath so that it may serve its end.* Apply this principle to these particular cases which you specify, and you will easily come to a sane decision.

Regarding the practice of working on the Sabbath, quite apart from the religious question, it is bad policy. Remember Cassian's story about St. John. "Why do you carry your bow unstrung?" he asked the hunter who mocked at him for playing with his pet partridge. "Because, if I kept it always strung, it would lose its spring." "Even so," said St. John, "be not offended at this relaxation of mine, which keeps my spirit from waxing faint." If you would do well in your classes, close your books on Saturday night and never open them, never think of them, till Monday morning. It pays. *Experto crede.*

But the Sabbath is designed for more than the

refreshment of body and mind. It is an opportunity for enlargement of the soul, for converse with the things unseen and eternal; and no employment is permissible which does not serve this end. According to this test, what about reading novels? Does it open the windows of the soul? Does it furnish an outlet into Eternity? No Sabbath has been well spent if we do not feel at its close as though we had made an excursion to the City of God, and paid a visit to the Father's House.

3. Consider the matter from a student's standpoint.

(1) The credibility of Christianity is certainly a profound and urgent problem, demanding the serious attention of every intelligent mind; and the relevant literature is enormous. Does not the Sabbath afford an opportunity for exploring this wide and wealthy domain?

(2) There is a literature of religion, and it contains priceless treasures. No one is entitled to call himself an educated man who is ignorant of these classics. It would be a present delight and an abiding enrichment if you devoted the quiet hours which Sunday brings to books like these: St. Augustine's *De Civitate Dei*, St. Bernard's *De Diligendo Dei*, Dante's *Divina Commedia*, Bunyan's immortal works. There is this danger in such reading, that, having no definite and immediate object like study which ends in an examination, it is apt to grow desultory and degenerate into a sort of day-dreaming; and this demoralises the mind and enervates its fibre. Against this danger there is no surer defence than devout and reverent attendance on the regular ordinances of public worship. The very routine is salutary. It is a channel for devotion, and prevents

what should be a river of refreshment from diffusing itself aimlessly and becoming a morass.

My quotation to-day is from Dr. Chalmers: "Heaven grant that my great object through the day may be the honour and felicity of writing a pure register in the evening."

THE HOLY MINISTRY

XIII.—QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE SACRED OFFICE

J. G. E.—"I am twenty years of age. It has been for at least four years my constant prayer to God that He may reveal to me a definite object for my life's work. I am now in the timber business, and as yet am only serving my apprenticeship, so cannot say whether I am a success at it or not. I believe I am in no way above the average intellectually, but I know I have seen God. I have often thought that perhaps God wills that I should set myself apart for His special work."

Ere I could advise you I must know you personally. It may help you and others, who have written me to like purpose, if I indicate several things which, it seems to me, go toward constituting a call to the ministry; but I beg you to understand that I deal only with general principles, and their application lies with yourself. Advice is really possible only where it is unnecessary, and in every serious crisis one must act on one's own judgment and responsibility.

Of course, the first and indispensable qualification is personal acquaintance with the Lord Jesus Christ, and a personal experience of His grace. A minister is a witness, and he must know that whereof he testifies. An unconverted minister is not only use-

less; he is miserable. Therefore, unless you know Jesus, the ministry is not for you.

But this in itself is not sufficient. It is the common mark of all Christians, and there are peculiar qualifications which a minister must possess. He has a special office, and it demands special aptitudes, mainly two.

1. *Intellectual calibre.* In the old Scottish phrase, a minister needs not only "piety" but "parts." It is rank nonsense to talk about the Apostles as unlearned fishermen. Whatever they may have been at the outset, they equipped themselves for their ministry, and consecrated all their faculties to its service. St. Paul could never have written his great Epistles, those masterpieces of Rabbinical dialectic, unless he had sat at the feet of Gamaliel; and the Epistle to the Hebrews displays on every page the influence of the brilliant scholarship of Alexandria. A minister is not a mere mouthpiece of the Holy Spirit. He is a steward of the mysteries of God; and, since it has pleased God to commit His historic revelation to a written record, it is necessary that we should qualify ourselves for its study and interpretation. It is because there were men of consecrated intellect that the Bible was written at the first, and afterwards translated out of the original tongues, that all may read it. "The knowledge of the priest," said St. Francis of Sales, "is the eighth sacrament of the Church." And Richard Baxter expressed the same truth no less emphatically, when he said: "Education is God's ordinary Way for the Conveyance of His Grace, and ought no more to be set in opposition to the Spirit, than the preaching of the Word." It is the office of a Christian teacher to interpret the

Unchanging Saviour to the changeful mind of his generation, and it is a heavy calamity for himself and his congregation when a man undertakes it with an uninstructed and undisciplined intellect.

2. *The quality of a preacher*—the quality which attracts and holds and masters men. And this is not oratory or culture or an imposing presence. St. Paul was a moving preacher, yet he "came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom," and "his bodily presence was weak and his speech contemptible." It is said that a young priest once asked Juan de Avila how he could learn to preach with power. "There is no other way," answered the saint, "but by ardent love of God." True, but St. John has taught us that we love God whom we have not seen by loving our brethren whom we have seen; and so I would say that there is no other way of preaching with power but by warm love of man—that sweet human compassion which makes the preacher's heart gentle, lights up his face, dims his eyes, and quivers in his voice. There is a beautiful story of St. Francis of Sales which illustrates my meaning. "I am surprised," he said to the Bishop of Bellay during his ministry at Paris, "that the people in this great city flock so eagerly to my sermons: for my tongue is slow and heavy, my conceptions low, and my discourses flat, as you yourself are witness." "Do you imagine," replied the Bishop, "that eloquence is what they seek in your discourses? It is enough for them to see you in the pulpit. Your heart speaks to them by your countenance and by your eyes, were you only to say the *Our Father* with them. The most common words in your mouth, burning with the fire of charity, pierce and melt all hearts."

These, then, are the qualifications for the Holy Ministry: (1) A personal acquaintance with the Lord Jesus; (2) an intellect worthy to be laid on His Altar, an aptitude for the dispensation of His mysteries; and (3) a natural affection for one's fellow-men, the souls for whom He died—a loving heart, a sympathetic mind, a gentle face, a tender voice. The problem solves itself: If a man is fit to be in the ministry, he cannot keep out of it. "The true sign of a vocation," says Renan, "is the impossibility of getting away from it: that is to say, of succeeding in anything except that for which one was created."

My quotation to-day is from the Talmud: "If you have taken up God's trade, put on His livery."

XIV.—SERMON-PREPARATION

M. S. S.—"I find the selection of topics and texts a very difficult matter."

Furnish your mind by constant study and enlarge your heart by loving intercourse with your fellow-creatures: this is the sovereign rule for getting sermons. Keep in touch with Jesus and catch His gracious, sweet, and gentle spirit: this is the secret of preaching them effectively.

It may be helpful to you and others if I tell you what experience has taught me of the art of sermon-preparation.

There are two grand axioms:—I.—*A sermon should be interesting*. And there are two secrets of being interesting.

(1) The choice of a text. Much depends on this. It is a strong advantage when the text arrests attention and excites curiosity, and this may often be secured by a felicitous combination of verses. *E. g.*, announce as your text St. John iii. 16, and no one will expect anything fresh: what can be said here that has not been said already a thousand times? But couple with it St. John xvii. 9, and you will see expectancy on every face. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son" . . . "I pray

not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given Me": what does this mean—this final narrowing, as it seems, of the initial declaration of a world-wide love? The truth is that it was precisely because He loved the world that Jesus concentrated Himself on His disciples; furbishing, as it were, the instruments of its salvation. He prayed for them for its sake. I once preached on "The Blessing of a Frustrated Ambition," from St. Mark x. 37 and xv. 27; and one of my hearers remarked afterwards: "That was an effective text. It gave you *something to jump off*."

(2) The use of illustrations. Only see to it that they are fitting. Beware, on the one hand, of anecdotage, and, on the other, of illustrations which do not illustrate—recondite literary allusions, incomprehensible to the very persons who need assistance. An illustration is an explanation of something remote by something familiar, and thus it cannot be too simple and homely. This is the philosophy of illustration, the principle underlying the parabolic teaching of our Lord—that the transcendent truths of revelation are nothing else than common things lifted to their highest issues. Earth is as a shadow of heaven. We have fatherhood here and the Heavenly Father there; brotherhood here and the Elder Brother there; homes here and the Father's House there. Show that the sublime doctrine which you would enforce has its roots on earth, and you will make it comprehensible and credible. This is the supreme secret of being interesting. Speak about real things which make up the fabric of human life.

II.—*Every sermon should have a definite aim.* Here are two rules which I got from that brilliant Scottish preacher, the late Dr. A. Orrock Johnston, at

the outset of my ministry, and which have helped me ever since—

(1) "There are two ideals of a sermon—to do justice to your subject and to do justice to your audience." The former is a common mistake of beginners. They overload their sermons, and simply bewilder. It is no matter though you do not exhaust your text: better this than exhaust your hearers. Fasten on a single truth; emphasise and enforce it. There may be much else in the text which you do not touch, but you can return to it and deal with some other of its contents. There are few texts which will not furnish several sermons.

(2) "A sermon should be like a speech concluding with a motion." See your goal, and make for it resolutely and steadily. Have a definite aim and reach the mark. Make your hearers feel at the close that they have had a distinct call addressed to them which they must accept or reject. This is the idea of a sermon: You stand up to put a motion, and you must speak to the motion from the first sentence to the last. Your conclusion should be, in effect: "Now I have put the motion before you: do you accept it?" If your hearers go away not knowing exactly what you wanted them to do, your sermon is a failure. You stood up to make a motion, and you neither spoke to it nor proposed it.

And so here is a sure test of a sermon—one which you should apply to every sermon ere you preach it: Can you give it a title—an apt, concise, pointed definition of its drift? If you cannot, then you do not know what you are driving at; and how can your hearers know? It is astonishing how often people say: "I could take nothing away." This is a heavy con-

demnation. When you have prepared your sermon, ask yourself what it is about. Perhaps you find that it is about several things: then it should be not one sermon but several, and you must make it several. Always give your sermon a title, and announce it after reading your text. Ere the ship sails, tell the passengers whither she is bound.

My quotation to-day is from Bacon: "Reading maketh a Full Man; Conference a Ready Man; and Writing an Exact Man."

XV.—SERMON-DELIVERY

J. A. H. M.—"I am a young minister of the Methodist Church of Canada. It is my custom to memorise my sermons, which involves much labour. My memory frequently slips, and it is feeling quite unable to bear the strain. The consequence is that when I am preaching I am compelled to have my manuscript before me. On two or three occasions lately I have tried to preach extemporaneously, *i. e.* without preparation of the verbal form, but failed ignominiously each time. Could you advise me how to break with the memoriter method?"

There are three methods. 1. Writing out one's sermon and taking the manuscript to the pulpit and reading it off. The objection to this is simply that it is not preaching; it is essay-reading. Sometimes indeed it is successful. For instance, Dr. Thomas Chalmers read his sermons, and he was a preacher of the great order. But it was not his reading that made him successful: he was successful in spite of it. And he could afford to do what lesser men dare not. There used to be a stout prejudice against read sermons, and if it has practically disappeared, the reason is probably that there is now-a-days less interest in preaching; and I am sure that if the old interest is to return, the old method must be revived. A sermon is a personal appeal, and it is essential that the preacher

should look his hearers in the face and talk with them. It is not preaching unless each hearer feels that he is being personally addressed, and that inattention would be bad manners.

2. Writing the sermon and committing it to memory, and then reciting it in the pulpit. This is your method, and is the worst possible. It is no wonder that you are feeling the strain. Continue, and you will inevitably suffer a nervous and, perhaps, a mental collapse. It is a ridiculous method. You are simply reading your sermon off the back of your head, and you had far better read it off a paper. It would be more natural—easier for yourself, and pleasanter for your hearers.

3. There is, to my thinking, only one right method: Master your subject, and go into the pulpit and talk to your congregation out of the fulness of your heart. Then you will neither need nor want a manuscript.

I recommend this method on the strength of my own experience. My practice is, or rather was while I was a minister, to preach my sermons first and write them afterwards. I used to get hold of my subjects each Sunday evening, and all the week long they were simmering in my mind. By Friday night they had taken shape, and on Saturday I outlined them on a couple of half-sheets of note-paper. These I took into the pulpit on Sunday—not for use, but in case my memory should play me a trick. As a matter of fact I never needed them. I never thought what language I should use. I knew what I wanted to say, and the language came. The secret is to have a distinct mental picture of what you are talking about, and describe simply what you see. If you see it

clearly, you have no difficulty in describing it. There is always only one right word, and it leaps to meet the thought. Think clearly, see distinctly, and the language will come unsought. If ever you are in doubt about the fitting word, it is because the thought is blurred.

My rules for preaching are: (1) Know the road which you mean to travel, and see the end which you mean to reach, and describe the scenery as you go along. There is no danger of forgetting. Trust your memory, and you will be surprised how well it will serve you. A bad memory is usually one that gets no chance. And if the picture is before you, you cannot forget it.

(2) Never mind the language. Eloquence is not fine phrasing, but the gleam of a kindled imagination, the upwelling of the opened fountain of the heart. Get mastered by a noble thought, and your speech will infallibly be noble too. Some time ago an esteemed Welsh minister sent me this memorable counsel of the late Dr. Lewis Edwards, and I gladly pass it on to you and the rest of my brethren: "You will find among your congregations different sorts of people and of varied attainments. You will find there the intelligent few, the knowing many, and the ignorant mass. I would advise you to ignore the knowing many, preach to the ignorant mass, and you will please the intelligent few." It is told of one preacher that "the common people heard Him gladly," and it is written of Him that "never man spake like Him."

(3) Cultivate the art of illustration. It helps your hearers to see the picture which is before your own mind.

(4) At all costs contrive to look your hearers in the face. There is something appealing in a human face. It suggests so much—the life which lies behind it, and all the solemn mystery of its joys and sorrows. Preaching means telling men about Jesus, and it is not preaching at all if it does not breathe the fragrance of His infinite compassion. These are preachers' equipments—a full mind, a gentle heart, and a kind face.

My quotation to-day is from Euthymius Zigabenus, the good monk of Constantinople. He is commenting on St. Luke's story of the Child Jesus among the Doctors. What would those wise men have felt had it been revealed to them who the wondrous Boy really was? "Therefore let us who are teachers fear, recognising that in our midst is the Christ, attending how we teach."

XVI.—'LECTURING"

J. C.—"I should be glad if you would kindly point out the distinction between a 'sermon' and what Scotch ministers call a 'lecture.'"

The "sermon" is an isolated message. It comes to the preacher in one or other of two ways. Either the experience of the moment—his own or his people's—suggests it, or else a text lays hold of him in his study of the Scriptures. And in either case the message is good and helpful; but it has a fault, and the fault is just that it is isolated. A preacher who follows this method solely is not a "good steward of the manifold grace of God." He sees and proclaims aspects of the Truth, not the whole Truth. He may go on for a lifetime, and at the close neither he nor his hearers will have an adequate perception of the compass and sweep of the Christian revelation. "When," says Hofmann in his *Schriftbeweis*, "we embody any fact in our system which is but cursorily mentioned without being attested by the whole drift of the sacred history, it is true that we may have *a* Word of God for it, but we have not *the* Word of God." This is the method of the old quarriers of proof-texts. They adduced Scriptural authority for the most unscriptural doctrines. Thus, when the Arians were asked at the Council of Nicæa if they believed the Son to be "the

eternal image of God," they answered: "Yes, for we men are eternal. Is it not written that 'we which live are alway'?" (2 Cor. iv. 11).

The corrective of this is the method which takes up a portion of the Scriptures and expounds it section by section, verse by verse, word by word, ascertaining the meaning of the sacred writer and following out his argument. We have classic examples of this method in St. Augustine's *Tractatus* and John Owen's Expositions of Psalm cxxx. and the Epistle to the Hebrews. If you have any doubt whether this style of preaching can be interesting and effective, just look at Dr. MacLaren's Expositions.

Of course it is easy to fail, and the chief danger lies in over-attention to details, so that, according to the German proverb, it is impossible to see the wood for the trees. There is, however, no fear of this if the preacher has grasped the argument, and follows its movement and kindles with its glow. He should open with a few illuminating sentences of introduction or exegesis, and then, when the thought stands out clear and distinct, commend and enforce it. It is wonderful how many texts for ordinary sermons, which would never have been observed in the ordinary course of reading, will present themselves in the course of such a study, sparkling with fresh significance.

The practice of "lecturing" is beneficial to a congregation. It makes the Bible more intelligible. Every one who has heard and understood an able exposition of a sacred book has gained a new and abiding possession, and made a distinct addition to his intellectual and spiritual store. And it is no less beneficial to the minister, and that in two ways.

(1) It engages him in a piece of serious and

thorough-going study. Ere he can lecture through a book he must master it, and this he can do only by the use of all the relevant literature which is accessible to him. I would counsel every young minister to have always a course of lectures on hand. There could be no better discipline, no surer safeguard against idleness and slovenliness. I began my ministry with a course of lectures on the Gospel according to St. Mark, and that was the germ of *The Days of His Flesh*. And the germ is sprouting still.

(2) It is peculiarly expedient for a minister whose lot is cast in an obscure place, and whose only intercourse is with simple and narrow-thoughted people. Amid such surroundings one's ideals of life are so apt to get petty and too often squalid, and if he would keep his soul alive and escape contraction, he must get his head into Eternity. And what more effective way is there than by converse with the holy men who witnessed the drama of Redemption, and the scholars who, during the intervening centuries, have busied themselves with their testimony?

I learned this lesson from my old teacher and friend, the late Professor A. B. Bruce. He introduced me to my first charge, and that Sunday night, as we sat in my study, he said to me: "You will get no inspiration from your surroundings here: see that you seek it from your books." I remembered his counsel, and I found it good. The years which I spent in that quiet parish proved very profitable. If ever I felt "cabin'd, cribb'd, confin'd," and found myself disposed to fret, I had only to get into my study; and, behold, I was in a large and wealthy place and in the fellowship of the immortals. My study was the most sacred and wonderful place on

earth to me. It was my refuge and my sanctuary. "Thou," I would say, "art my hiding-place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance."

My quotation to-day is from a letter of Sir Walter Scott: "I think most clergymen diminish their own respectability by falling into indolent habits, and what players call *walking through their part*. You, who have to beat up against an infirmity, and, it may be, against some unreasonable prejudices arising from that infirmity, should determine to do the thing not only well, but better than others."

XVII.—AIDS TO PULPIT-PRAYER

W. R.—"Can you tell me of any book which would help me in my pulpit-prayers?"

I sympathise with you in your sense of the importance and difficulty of this office of our sacred ministry, and perhaps it may be helpful to you if, very conscious of my insufficiency, I indicate my own feeling and practice.

(1) As a rule, printed prayers help me little. Prayer is communion with God, and it implies forgetfulness of oneself and one's surroundings. This is hardly possible when one sits down and shapes and elaborates sentences. Printed prayers are apt to be merely pious disquisitions. It would be otherwise if they were taken down by a reporter warm from the speaker's lips and heart; but I know of hardly any such book of prayers which I would recommend.

I must, however, make an exception in favour of the prayers in Jeremy Taylor's *Holy Living*, and that immortal book, not of prayers but of liturgical suggestions, *The Devotions of Bishop Andrewes*, especially the latter.

(2) Books of devotion help greatly—notwithstanding Jeremy Taylor's denunciation of them as "in a large degree the cause of so great indevotion; because they are (some few excepted) represented naked in the conclusions of spiritual life, without art or learning,

and made apt for persons who can do nothing but believe and love, not for them that can consider and love." They blow like the south wind upon the garden of the soul, and the spices thereof flow out. I spend the closing hours of each Saturday evening in the company of books of this order. My favourites are St. Augustine's *Manuale;* St. Bernard's *De Interiori Domo, De Amore Dei, De Diligendo Deo;* and the Latin hymns in Daniel's *Thesaurus.* A delightful companion for the quiet hour is Dods' *Old Wells Re-opened.* Palgrave's *Treasury of Sacred Song* attunes the heart. And I like Andrew Murray's *Inner Chamber.* It is easy to pray after converse with companions like these.

(3) The peerless book of devotion is the Psalter; and it is a helpful exercise to take one of the Psalms and observe how that holy man of God made his approach to the Throne of Grace, and then tread the same path.

(4) It is a strong reinforcement to a minister if he have in his congregation even a single saint and have an understanding with him. The consciousness of such a presence is an inspiration and an elevation. And there is not only sympathy but telepathy between souls. Moody-Stuart tells how one Sabbath morning, as he was leading the devotions of his congregation, he was visited by a succession of alien yet familiar thoughts. "These," he said to himself, "are not my own thoughts. They are Dr. John Duncan's. He must be here; yet he cannot be here, for he is in Hungary." He bent over the pulpit as soon as he had finished the prayer, and saw his friend sitting in the session seat. He had returned home unexpectedly, and entered the church late.

(5) Our vestries should be oratories. We should pass to our pulpits straight from the Presence Chamber. We should receive no one before the service unless he comes to pray with us. It may seem a small matter, yet I think it is of great moment to recognise that our organists are our fellow-ministers, and that, when they visit our vestries, it is not merely for the arrangement of the service of praise, but for the higher and more important purpose of joining with us in a brief but earnest prayer of consecration and supplication. This is an exercise which should never be omitted. It is good for both, uniting our hearts and fitting us for our common task of drawing the worshippers to the feet of Jesus.

(6) Our prayers should be brief and pointed, not doctrinal expositions, but simple and direct appeals. And they should be homely, human, and sympathetic, dealing with actual and present needs. To this end we must know our people, and have a kindly and personal interest in their concerns. If we be acquainted with their joys and sorrows, their temptations, difficulties, hopes and anxieties, we shall never lack abundance of petitions to carry to the Throne of Grace—petitions which will come warm from our own hearts and awaken a fervent response in the hearts of our fellow-worshippers.

(7) All this, however, touches only the fringe. The heart of the matter is that there can be no true prayer unless there be in the soul a well-spring fed by the rain and dew of Heaven. True prayer is the overflow of a gracious heart, shedding abroad kindness and benediction, and rising up in gratitude and desire. Keep the inner fountain clean and full: that is the grand and infallible secret. We are prayerful just so

much as we are near to Jesus. It is always helpful to remind ourselves what manner of business it is that we are engaged in when we pray. It is an approach to the glorious God and Father. It is He whom we are addressing, and the consciousness of this puts reverence and godly fear into our hearts. And it pours grace into our lips.

My quotation to-day is from San Pedro de Alcantara: "The contradiction of good people is one of the hardest trials."

XVIII.—PREPARATION OF PULPIT-PRAYER

K.—"What do you think as to prayer-preparation?"

Do not prepare your prayers: prepare your heart. Prepare it by communion with the Lord Jesus and opening it to His Spirit of tenderness and compassion. Cast out all bitterness. Think of your own and your people's sins and sorrows and needs, and then go into your pulpit and carry these lovingly and believingly to His Mercy-seat and lay them down before His blessed Face. Thus you will have no lack of fitting and moving petitions. Here are three directions:

1. *Prayer should be sweet and gentle.* Remember that you are speaking in the Presence Chamber, and this will elevate your thoughts and refrain your lips. If you have any grievance rankling in your mind, be very careful to make not the remotest allusion to it, unless in the way of supplicating more of the spirit of meekness and long-suffering. And keep politics out of your prayers. Pray for our rulers as the Scriptures direct, but pray for them in such a fashion that people of all ways of thinking may be able to join in your petitions. Get your head into Eternity, and do not carry the dust and noise of earth to the Throne of Grace. It is told of an old-fashioned Scottish minister that the Sabbath before the meeting of the General

Assembly he prayed that the Fathers and Brethren might be so restrained as to do as little harm as possible to the cause of Religion. That came very near a transgression of the limits.

2. *Prayer should be simple and brief.* That is an all too common mistake, which an old Scottish lady hit off when she said that a certain minister in his prayers "gave the Lord a deal o' miscellaneous information." A prayer is not a sermon, and it should not be a doctrinal exposition. When we approach the Lord, there is no need for us to tell Him of the way of access or the ground of acceptance. All this should be reserved for the sermon. In his *Horæ Subsecivæ* Dr. John Brown relates this instructive incident of his father's student days: "He used to tell of his master, Dr. Lawson, reproving him, in his honest but fatherly way, as they were walking home from the Hall. My father had in his prayer the words, 'that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.' The old man, leaning on his favourite pupil, said, 'John, my man, you need not have said "*that is, the devil*"; you might have been sure that *He* knew whom you meant.'" A prayer should never be wearisome.

3. *Prayer should be orderly.* It is fatal to a service if there are several long, discursive, general prayers; and it may be helpful to you if I state the order of service which experience commended to me while I had the happiness of being a minister.

(1) Commence with a prayer of Invocation. I always used here the Lord's Prayer, and there is nothing so appropriate. It should never be omitted, at all events from the morning service. That primitive manual of Church Procedure, *The Teaching of*

the Twelve Apostles, directs that it should be repeated thrice daily. I dislike the prevalent custom of appending it as a sort of tag to the Intercessory Prayer. This is less than reverent. (2) Praise. (3) Old Testament Scripture. (4) General Prayer—thanksgiving, confession, consecration. (5) Children's Address. (6) Children's Hymn. (7) New Testament Scripture. (8) Praise. (9) Intercessory Prayer. There are certain people who must be remembered here every Sunday—the sick, the mourners, the aged, the children, all suffering creatures, the poor, the tempted, the fallen, our friends far away among strangers or on the sea. These should never be forgotten, and there are other interests so numerous that it is well to introduce them in turn—our country, our town, the Church, and missions. This determines our intercessions for four successive Sundays, and I adhered to a set form, a sort of private liturgy, varying it to meet occasional needs. Why should not constant needs have a constant expression? And after a month's interval there is no risk of monotony. (10) Praise. (11) The Sermon. (12) Praise. (13) The Benediction. I prefer that there should be no prayer after the sermon, unless it be very brief. It is so apt to take the form of a recapitulation of your sermon, informing the Lord what you have said. Let the closing hymn be the congregation's response to what they have heard, and let them disperse with your message in their minds. But be careful always to close your sermon with an invocation: "May the Lord bless the preaching of His Word, and to His Name be the praise." And be sure that you pronounce these or similar words deliberately, reverently, and impressively. Have a like conclusion to each reading of

Scripture—not a gabbled formula: "Here endeth the lesson," but a solemn invocation, with lifted hand above the open Bible: "May the Lord add His blessing to our reading of His Holy Word, and write its truth upon our hearts. Amen."

My quotation to-day is a story of the Bishop of Bellay about St. Francis of Sales: "I will confess one of my contrivances when he visited me in my own house. I contrived to bore holes, by which I saw him dressing, sitting, walking, or writing, when usually persons are most off their guard; yet I could not trace any difference in attitude or manner: when he prayed, you would have imagined that he saw himself surrounded by holy angels."

XIX.—SICK VISITATION

W. S.—"I am doing a little work in sick visiting, but very often I get embarrassed for want of words in prayer and Scripture reading. Could you recommend me a book, a sort of 'Sick Visitor's Guide or Companion,' with suggested prayers and portion of Scripture to read?"

Probably there are books of this description, but I do not know them, nor do I wish to know them. Visitation of the sick is a delicate art; and unless one has the aptitude for it, one had better not attempt it. It seems to me that there are two qualifications which are indispensable.

(1) Sympathy; and this is hardly possible without a personal experience of suffering. I remember once going by appointment to visit a friend who was prostrated by a painful illness. As I approached his door, I encountered a minister just leaving it—a big, cheerful, hearty, full-blooded man. "You're going to see our friend?" he cried. "I've just been in cheering him up." I would have turned away had my presence not been expected and required. I found my poor friend nervous and excited. "Oh," he moaned, "I don't think a strong man should be a minister!" And there is something in the idea. You remember the definition of a priest in the Epistle to the Hebrews

—one "who can have compassion . . . for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity." Certainly a "robustious" person is out of place in a sick-room. Gentle movements and soft tones are essential, and there are people whose very step on the floor is an irritation. That is a true touch in Scott's description of Jeanie Deans: she "had a voice low and sweetly toned, an admirable thing in a woman"; and this is the reason why a woman, if she be a lady, makes the best of nurses. The necessity is tact; and tact is an instinct. If you need a book to teach you what to say, never go sick visiting.

(2) A personal experience of the grace of the Lord Jesus, and of the comfort and peace which it affords. If "the Word of Christ dwell in us richly," fitting texts will leap, warm and fragrant, to our lips at the least call. A sick visit should be brief and informal. It seems to me a stupid blunder to read a passage and offer a set prayer. As you approach the door and wait for admittance, lift up your heart for wisdom and tenderness and the guidance of the Holy Spirit; and then go gently in and sit down quietly. A verse will come into your mind: that is your God-given message. Say, "I have brought you this message," and repeat it slowly, distinctly, and softly; then very briefly thank the Lord for this, His good Word, and commend the sufferer to His gracious keeping; after that repeat a familiar verse of a psalm or a hymn, and gently withdraw.

The golden secret of success in visitation, whether of the sick or of the whole, is preparation of heart. Never ring a door-bell without a silent prayer. When you enter, be sure that Jesus goes in with you. It was not for naught that He bade His Apostles enter every

dwelling with the benediction, "Peace be upon this house!" When I was a minister, I always said it inwardly, both as I went in and as I came out. I am disposed to think it is because the idea of it has been lost sight of that Pastoral Visitation is such a troublous problem in these days. If it were recognised as a solemn and priestly office, ministers would never go rushing from door to door and putting in so many visits in an afternoon, nor would the people ever clamour for more of this senseless and unprofitable attention. A Christian minister is, in a profound sense, a priest of the Lord, and his every office is sacramental. Once a minister, who was reputed "a grand visitor," though, by the way, he was a poor preacher, told me how he loathed it. I asked him why he did it, and he answered: "Oh, it keeps them from complaining!" Unhappy minister! unhappier people!

My quotation to-day is from Frederic Myers: "The characteristics of a Christian minister, ideally considered, are humility and kindness and self-denial. Having no interests to seek, but some to renounce; finding his wages mainly in his work; denying himself for the sake of others, and desiring not to be ministered unto, but to minister; superior to his Brethren only because more like his Lord, and honourable only in virtue of his humbleness—such is a Christian minister."

XX.—PASTORAL VISITATION

F. P. and Others, Ministers and Laymen.—You have consulted me about that vexatious business, Pastoral Visitation, and it is with some reluctance that I discuss it. It seems to me that there is a vast deal of nonsense talked about it, and I am often disposed to say with Dr. Johnson: "My dear friend, clear your mind of cant." Pastoral Visitation may be a necessity of modern Church-life, but it is a significant fact that it is not a New Testament institution. "I see nothing," says Mr. Eleazar Roberts, in his engaging Welsh story, *Owen Rees*, "in St. Paul's Epistles to Timothy or Titus telling them to be sure to pay regular pastoral visits, and I often think there is a smack of popery and sacerdotalism about the general expectation amongst the people for such visits to be paid. It seems to me to spring from the old Popish notion of priestly absolution." The New Testament says a great deal about preaching and teaching, but never a word about Pastoral Visitation; and when Jesus sent out the Seventy two by two, He charged them with emphasis: "Go not from house to house" (St. Luke x. 7). Their office was to preach the glad tidings of the Kingdom of Heaven; and this is ever the supreme function of their successors. Whatever impairs its efficiency is contrary to the Gospel. "It hath pleased God," says St. Paul, "by

the foolishness of preaching"—which is quite different from "the preaching of foolishness"—"to save them that believe."

Hence emerges a principle: Preaching is the supreme office of the ministry, and neither visitation nor anything else must be suffered to weaken it. It is a great work, and it demands strenuous preparation of mind and soul. Every sermon should cost the preacher his very life-blood. This is the truth of the old superstition that a bullet would surely hit its mark if it were first dipped in the blood of the huntsman. And there are two essentials:

(1) Patient and diligent searching of the Scriptures with all accessible aids of sacred scholarship. At least five hours daily in one's study alone with one's books and God—that is the minimum of preparation; not merely, of course, for the sermons of the week, but for the enrichment of one's mind.

(2) One sermon at all events should be fully written out, as carefully as if it were going to the publishers, by way of correcting slovenliness of thought and style. My own practice was to preach first and write afterwards; but in any case write. It is a melancholy fact that there are ministers who never write their sermons, and prepare for the pulpit on Saturday night. Their excuse is that their time and strength are absorbed by pastoral visitation, and they could not otherwise hold their congregations together. These, I observe, are invariably the men who bemoan the irreligion of our age and the prevailing neglect of ordinances. "My dear friend, clear your mind of cant." Believe me, there is nothing that will attract and hold a congregation but good preaching, and a man with a message, at all events in a live community, is always sure of

an audience. Until I exchanged the pulpit for the pew, I hardly realised how needful it is to escape from the dust and din of the world, and get one's head into Eternity, and catch a breath of the far-off Hills of God. Men are faint and weary, thirsting for the living water; and if you open a fountain in the wilderness, they will hasten to it eagerly and gladly. There will be no need to ferret them out.

What, then, is the use of Pastoral Visitation? It is ancillary to preaching. Its *raison d'être* is that a minister must know his people, if he would preach to them with understanding and sympathy; and one is never in the right attitude for preaching unless one be familiar with every home in the congregation, every face in the pews, the name of every child, the joys and sorrows of every heart. Once you know your people, there is no need to compass them with observance. It is enough for them to be assured that they have your affectionate interest, and that, if they require you, they have only to summon you, as they would their doctor. Of course, wherever there is trouble, there is need of loving ministration, and it should be faithfully rendered. This is a sacred office of the Christian ministry, second only to the preaching of the Word; and in a congregation of any size there is always so much occasion for it that there is no room for meaningless attentions which simply demoralise the recipients and cripple the true operations of the ministry. The Scottish proverb warns us against "tynin' buttles (losing sheaves) gaitherin' straes"; and this is what we do when we neglect the grand offices of the Gospel, and then strive to "hold our congregations together" by devices which are not merely unapostolic but ridiculous. Peripatetic agility

is essential in one who aspires to the honourable and useful office of penny-postman; but grace, intellect, and spiritual-mindedness are the indispensable qualifications for the office of the Holy Ministry, and a congregation which enjoys these knows their value, and cares little what else may be lacking.

My quotation to-day is from Richard Baxter: "O brethren, watch over your own hearts! Keep out sinful passions and worldly inclinations; keep up the life of faith and love; be much at home; and be much with God."

XXI.—READING

T. C.—"Your very helpful notes on pulpit-prayers encourage me to hope that you will some day deal with another minister's question, viz. how to conserve the fruits of one's general reading in order to the illumination and illustration of one's sermons."

Yes, some method is needed. If we trust to our unaided memories, much is inevitably lost. There is hardly anything more tantalising than to know that there is somewhere an illustration which would just clinch one's argument, and have it flitting through one's mind, and yet be unable to arrest it. I think authors might help us more than they do. Every book which is worth writing should be furnished with a careful index. The old scholars, with whom editorship was the task of a lifetime and a labour of love, did nobly in this matter. Just look at the indexes to the Elzevir *Seneca* or the Benedictine *St. Augustine*. There is not a word or thought on those multitudinous and golden pages which you may not, by their aid, lay hands on in a couple of minutes. But we must be content with what our authors are pleased to give us, and I shall gladly tell you my method, which has at least this to recommend it, that it has greatly helped me.

(1) We should read attentively. What counts is, not the amount that we read, but the amount that we

assimilate. There are some who can read by the page rather than by the line, and perceive at a glance what is in a book. But this is a rare faculty, and for most men the way is more laborious. For most, the rule holds that a book which is worth reading should not be scampered through. One of the lessons which Marcus Aurelius learned from Rusticus was "to read carefully, and not to be satisfied with a superficial understanding of a book." "I never knew," said Robertson of Brighton, "but one or two fast readers or readers of many books whose knowledge was worth anything."

(2) We are encouraged by the example of two distinguished masters of the art of reading to facilitate remembrance by the employment of mechanical devices. It was the habit of Seneca to mark passages which took his fancy, not on his own behoof merely, but for the advantage of friends to whom he lent his books (*Ep.* vi.). And the younger Pliny informs us that his erudite uncle was accustomed not simply to mark his books, but to make extracts. "He never read anything of which he did not make extracts. He was also wont to say that there was no book so bad that it was not profitable in some part" (*Ep.* iii. 5). Of course, the latter remark was made 1,800 years ago, and there is no doubt much worthless stuff in these days of profuse publication; yet, by the way, it is often a surprise to me when I read sneering critiques of books which I have read, if not with entire approval, yet with pleasure and profit. The truth is that a reviewer, like a reader, finds only so much as he brings. Experience has taught me the value of these devices. I started a Commonplace Book while I was at college, and it has proved an ever-deepening

mine of illustrations and suggestions. Quite as valuable is my interleaved Bible, with its references over against each verse to whatever of illumination I have encountered in my reading. The best of memories is so leaky that much escapes, and would be as water spilt upon the ground without such external receptacles to intercept it.

(3) Our reading should be orderly. Mere reading is not study. Indeed, it may be no better than a waste of time, a frivolous and unprofitable dissipation of the mind, what Thomas à Kempis calls "dispersion of heart." There must be method and purpose in our reading. We should always have on hand some serious and strenuous task.

I do not mean that we should eschew the lighter kinds of literature. On the contrary, they have their use. They refresh the mind, they keep it in touch with contemporary life, they give it brightness and sanity. This is the use of works of fiction, and here I may remark, for the benefit of friends who have consulted me on the legitimacy of novel-reading, that it depends on the quality of the novels and our way of reading them. It is unfair to judge an entire class, whether of men or of books, by its less reputable members. If we condemn fiction wholesale, we condemn not only *Robinson Crusoe*, but *The Pilgrim's Progress;* and, you know, it was an offence to many in Bunyan's day that a minister of the Gospel should have written an allegory. The fact is that fiction is an important and beneficent department of literature, and there are novels which have greatly served the Kingdom of God and promoted the cause of humanity. You know how Dickens contributed to the amelioration of our prison and poor laws, and Mrs. Beecher

Stowe to the emancipation of the American slaves. And there are novels, especially historical novels, which are simply a liberal education, widening one's horizon, enlarging one's sympathy, and helping one to a saner judgment of contemporary movements.

The danger of novel-reading is that it is apt to become a mere dissipation, a sort of intellectual dram-drinking, unfitting the mind for serious study. It should never be an employment, but simply an occasional refreshment; and its place, I think, is at the close of the day, when the mind is fatigued by strenuous effort, and needs relaxation. The solid hours of the day and the fresh energies of the mind should be devoted to some serious intellectual task. Some such task we should always have on hand. We should always be able, if a friend asks what we are engaged upon, to name some specific and worthy line of study. It is a minor but real advantage of this method that it strengthens the memory, whereas aimless and sporadic reading enfeebles it. Browsing animals are stupid.

My quotation to-day is from Seneca: "Always read approved books; and, if ever you fancy turning aside to others, come back to the former."

XXII.—ATTUNING THE HEART

T. H. (a minister) "believes fully that it is necessary to tune the heart before prayer and meditation, but does not know how to do it. Remember, *time* is very scant. Could you greatly help by a few hints *how*, helpful to the busy?"

It *must* be done. If living waters are to flow out of us, the inner fountain must not get choked; if we are to be lamps, the wick must be trimmed and the oil replenished. "For your people's sakes, therefore," says Richard Baxter, "look to your own hearts." Whatever else we may have to leave undone, we must do this. It is not for me to instruct my fellow-ministers; rather would I learn from them; yet, since you consult me, I venture to offer suggestions which seem to me worthy of consideration.

(1) It is needful, as I have already remarked, to avoid what Thomas à Kempis calls "dispersion of heart," and much may be done by cleaving to the proper work of the ministry and eschewing alien employments. It is my conviction that, unless in exceptional circumstances, a minister should have nothing to do with the business of boards and committees. His *raison d'être* is the winning of men for Christ, and the smallest parish is sufficient to

engross him. And, even if he have time to spare, such employments are not for him. As a Church is a house set part for sacred uses, and is not to be employed on common days as a schoolroom, as a lecture-hall, so a minister is a man set apart, and should reserve himself for his sacred office, never suffering himself to be regarded as a sort of general functionary.

(2) We should give the great business of the ministry the great place. "Pastoral visitation" is an effective method of fishing for men, but it is neither the only nor the chief method, and is it not possible to overdo it? Where there is real trouble, we cannot be too assiduous; but we should, as a rule, go to our people's homes as Christ's ambassadors, and, if we be continually frequenting them, we can hardly maintain this character. If we do not bring Christ with us, we had better stay away. I cannot help thinking it would be better for the spiritual life of some congregations if their ministers let them more alone and devoted themselves more to study and meditation. The proclamation of the Evangel is our supreme business and our grand opportunity, and nothing can atone for its neglect. It needs a burning heart, and it is sheer unfaithfulness to let the fire burn low for lack of fuel. People are mostly reasonable; and, if they know that their minister is engaged in the preparation of bread for their souls, they do not exact frivolous attentions.

(3) In this great business the cultivation of the soul means economy of time. "Meat and mass," according to the ancient Scottish proverb, "never hindered work." It is recorded of St. Francis of Sales that he studied as much at the foot of the Crucifix as in books,

being persuaded that the essential quality of a preacher is to be a man of prayer. The Bible does not reveal its wonders to uncleansed eyes. One does more and better work in a forenoon, after a season of communion with God, than in a week with an arid soul, unrefreshed by the dews of Heaven. "When I was occupied with *The Creation*," said Haydn, "always before I sat down to the piano I prayed to God with earnestness that He would enable me to praise Him worthily." I have a friend, one of our merchant-princes and a devout Christian, who when he has a particularly heavy day before him, always spends a longer time than usual in religious exercise. He finds that he is better fitted for the day's work, calmer amid its distractions and sounder in his judgment, when his heart has been fortified by the aids of grace. If this be true in secular business, how much more in the business of Christ! Therefore, in the language of St. Ignatius, "be at leisure for ceaseless prayers." One way of doing this is to cultivate the gracious habit of lifting up one's heart to Christ in the midst of one's employments, sending up, when thronged by perplexities, a short, sharp appeal for succour and guidance to the Ear which is ever open to the cry of faith. Is there not many an ill-advised speech, many a hasty action which we would not have to deplore, if, when we were dealing with troublesome people, we had paused a moment and communed with Christ? Let us take time to seek guidance, that we may not lose time by having to retrace our steps. And, sitting at our desks, let us exercise this blessed art whenever the sacred page is dark and no heavenly truth beams from it. St. Chrysostom says a wise thing at the beginning of his exposition of the miracle at Cana:

"Let us invoke the aid of this very Jesus who wrought the miracle, and thus approach the interpretation."

My quotation to-day is from San Pedro de Alcantara: "It is as necessary to regulate the heart before prayer and meditation as to tune the guitar before playing it."

XXIII.—DISCOURAGEMENT

C. A. W. (*Newfoundland*).—"I am a young preacher, about thirty-two years of age, and have been preaching for about ten years. But I have two troubles: (1) I do not find the Bible the source of comfort I could wish. (2) I have no definite fruit in my life or ministry."

You say that you do not find it a pleasure to read the pages of the Bible as you do those of some modern writers on theology and religion; and this is significant. It shows that you are really interested in the great matters of the Christian revelation; and those modern writers appeal to you just because they are modern. They speak the language of our generation, and deal directly with its living problems. The Bible, on the other hand, is an ancient book, and while it proclaims abiding truths, it clothes them in an old-world dress. The consequence is that it does not make a direct appeal to your mind. You have to translate it. You have to transport yourself into its world and breathe its atmosphere. Once you do this, you find that its truth is vital and strong, a perennial message for the human soul.

But, of course, an effort is necessary—a strenuous and unflagging discipline of mind and heart. A minister must be a student of the Word. His office

is first to explore the treasures of the ancient shrine, and then to exhibit them to his people who cannot discover them unaided. This is the *raison d'être* of an educated ministry. It has pleased God to commit His revelation to writing, and therefore sacred learning is an essential equipment of a Christian teacher.

And so, when you find that the Bible lacks interest, consider whether you are studying it adequately. The proper method is to take up its several books, or rather the several masses of cognate literature which compose it, and patiently master each by the use of all the aids which scholarship has provided. There is no book of the Bible which does not teem with fresh interest and sparkle with new beauty when one learns why it was written, and discovers its palpitating background of human life. Preaching should be educative. A minister is a teacher, and his people should be ever gaining a better understanding of the Written Word and a deeper insight into its wonder and glory.

It would, I am persuaded, be profitable both for ministers and congregations if the old Scottish practice of "lecturing" were resumed, *i. e.* the systematic exposition of a set portion of Scripture at one of the Sunday services. Of course, it can be very dull; but if the preacher has mastered the book and felt the grandeur of it, he will handle it *con amore*, and his exposition will be at once instructive and fascinating. To me, at all events, there is nothing more wearisome than the practice of taking snippets at random from the Bible and haranguing at large. "Lecturing" is a safeguard; it compels the preacher to engage in systematic and continuous study. It was the method of some of the great preachers of the early Church; and if you would realise how effective it can be, read

St. Chrysostom's exposition of the Epistle to the Romans. He passes from verse to verse, nay, from word to word, and whatever he touches is illumined. I do not wonder that, when those masterly discourses were delivered at Antioch, the great church was thronged.

As for your second difficulty, you cannot tell what fruit your ministry is producing. Have you ever heard the story of John Owen's conversion? While a student at Oxford he was awakened to spiritual concern, but he could find no peace. By and by he was in London, and went with a friend to hear that famous Presbyterian, Dr. Edmund Calamy, in Aldermanbury Chapel. To his disappointment, the preacher was not Dr. Calamy, but an unknown stranger from the country. However, his simplicity and earnestness touched Owen; and when the text was announced: "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" he prayed for a message to his soul. And his prayer was granted. He left the chapel rejoicing in the peace of Christ. And the odd circumstance is that he was never able to discover who that preacher was. The man had been called in to fill Dr. Calamy's pulpit in a sudden emergency; and none knew or cared whence he had come or whither he had gone. One whom the Church counted "a failure," he would return to his obscure place with his burden of discouragement; and he never learned what that sermon of his had achieved. He had brought John Owen to Christ, and on the great Day, when every man shall have his own, will he not, to his boundless surprise, share the reward and the glory of John Owen's splendid ministry?

People would often like to tell their minister what they owe him, but a fear of embarrassing their relations with him seals their lips. I continually get

letters from strangers who have heard me preach here and there, disclosing their hearts as they would never do were I dwelling beside them. They withhold their addresses and often their names, and I take this opportunity of expressing my appreciation.

My quotation to-day is from the Abbé de Saint-Cyran: "To spend time in counting and lamenting little faults is like a child who has fallen down in running, and who, instead of getting up and running again, stops to cry over his dirty hands, which delays him far more than the fall."

XXIV.—CLERICAL DEPORTMENT

D. M.—"Will you kindly say if it is sinful in ministers wasting their time playing cards? I am in my seventy-eighth year."

Like you I "know nothing of the use of cards," and therefore I am not qualified to say whether it is, generally, right or wrong. Considering that the game was invented for the amusement of an insane king, I should hardly think it can be a highly intellectual employment; and in any case I do not understand how a minister can have either time or taste for it. It is wonderful how responsibility sobers and elevates a man; and there is no responsibility like a minister's. A fitting sense of it puts an awe upon him, and detaches him from trivial and petty things. There are two ends which a minister must seek, and which control and limit one another.

1. He must get to know his people, and enter lovingly and sympathetically into their lives. This is the use of that most difficult of ministerial offices—Pastoral Visitation. It is a way of establishing intimate and personal relations. And whatever concerns our people must concern us—their joys and sorrows, their daily tasks and employments, their difficulties and temptations. Terence's line is a good motto for ministers: "Homo sum: humani nihil a me alienum

puto." The reason is that, if there be a sympathetic and affectionate fellowship between us, not only shall we preach more tenderly and directly, but they will be better disposed toward our message. Their love for the messenger will commend his message. And if they be in need of counsel, they will have no hesitation in appealing to us and spreading their trouble before us. And if they need reproof, they will receive it from us, knowing the love which lies behind it.

2. On the other hand, while he seeks to get near his people and prove himself their friend, a minister must never forget, and never let them forget, that he is more than their friend. He is Christ's ambassador, and the aim of all his dealings with them is to commend Christ to them. He cannot be too kindly or too human, but he must never—if I may say it without being misunderstood—lose his priestly character. This is the danger of overdoing pastoral visitation: it is apt to degenerate into mere friendly intercourse. I think that as a rule a minister should never visit a home without engaging in prayer; at all events, he should so conduct himself that when he goes away the inmates may feel as though Jesus had been with them. Otherwise he had better stay away. We should guard with sedulous and jealous vigilance against getting into such relations with our people as will make it difficult or unnatural for us to talk with them about the supreme and momentous matters of the soul. There is a striking illustration of this fatal blunder in Margaret Deland's story, *John Ward, Preacher*. One of its characters is Dr. Howe, a kindly, worldly-minded old clergyman of the type once known in Scotland as "the Moderates." His parishioner and friend, Mr. Denner, was dying, and

he was charged with the task of telling him so. "That's what makes it so hard to go and tell Denner that—that he's got to die. Somehow, we never touched on the serious side of life. I think that's apt to be the case with friends in our position. We have gone fishing together, and we have played whist —at least I've watched him—and talked politics or church business over our pipes; but never anything like this. We were simply the best of friends." There may be no harm in a game of whist, and it may be argued that it is a way of getting into touch with people. Perhaps; but what I desire is not so much to get into touch with my people as to get them into touch with Christ. I want to get near them, but I should like our meeting-place to have an outlook on Eternity. I want to be on such terms with them that it will be the simplest and easiest thing in the world to talk with them about Jesus whenever occasion arises. And, truth to tell—though this may be deemed merely a token of my limitation—I would find such a pastime an intolerable bore. That was a just and stinging rebuke which Philip of Macedon administered to his son, when the latter sang at an entertainment and won the applause of the company for his skilful execution. "Are you not ashamed," said the king, "to sing so well?" A prince should have had higher thoughts. His skill should have been displayed in weightier matters.

My quotation to-day is from William Penn: "That Minister whose Life is not the Model of his Doctrine, is a Babler rather than a Preacher; a Quack rather than a Physician of Value."

XXV.—"JESTING WHICH IS NOT CONVENIENT"

K.—"I have been greatly horrified by some of the flippant and repugnant expressions which I often hear in extempore prayers from our pulpits. What do you think as to prayer preparation? Another matter is whether any useful purpose can be served by the recitation in sermons of jokes and comical expressions. For instance, I frequently have to listen to a minister who, referring to a stout man recently, said: 'It was a Sabbath day's journey round him.' Preaching on Joseph and the Pit, he remarked that the brothers thought it a splendid opening for a young man."

This sort of thing is intolerable. It is stupid vulgarity, lacking even the excuse of cleverness.[1] It is an example of the crime of "debasing the religious coinage," "poisoning the sacred wells"; for the mischief of it is that the stupid thing sticks to one's memory and obtrudes itself, like a grinning fiend,

[1] Cf. Cowper's *Task* ("The Time-piece"):—

"He, that negotiates between God and man,
As God's ambassador, the grand concerns
Of judgment and of mercy, should beware
Of lightness in his speech. 'Tis pitiful
To court a grin, when you should woo a soul;
To break a jest, when pity should inspire
Pathetic exhortation; and t'address
The skittish fancy with facetious tales,
When sent with God's commission to the heart!"

whenever one hears or reads the abused passage. A preacher should always be a gentleman, and never behave himself unseemly. St. Paul styles this sort of gaucherie "jesting which is not befitting" (Eph. v. 4, R.V.); and, if it be reprehensible in conversation, it is unpardonable in preaching; and the perpetrator of the outrage should be expelled from his pulpit. It proves that he has no appreciation of the sacredness of his office—no sense either of the eternal verities which he is there to deal with, or of the pathos of human life. "Look upon your congregations," says Richard Baxter, "believingly, and with compassion. Oh, speak not one cold or careless word about so great a business as Heaven or Hell!" There is indeed a place in preaching for kindly humour, that "indispensable pledge of sanity," as Thoreau calls it; but there must be discretion in its use. "The roots of laughter" should ever "lie near the fountain of tears." Such sallies as you quote may win a laugh from thoughtless and silly people, but they must grate on the ears of the troubled and sorrowful; and these are the majority in every congregation.

I am no ritualist, yet I think there should be something priestly in the bearing of a minister, and I sympathise with that outburst of Dr. Johnson. He was once "in company with several clergymen, who thought that they should appear to advantage by assuming the lax jollity of men of the world; which, as it may be observed in similar cases, they carried to noisy excess. Johnson, who they expected would be *entertained*, sat grave and silent for some time; at last, turning to Beauclerk, he said, by no means in a whisper, 'This merriment of parsons is mighty offensive.'"

This sort of thing exacts its penalty: the offender is regarded as "a funny man," and he is never taken seriously though he should speak with apostolic unction. In one of his letters Macaulay tells an instructive anecdote of Sidney Smith. The clerical humorist was visiting him in London, and, says Macaulay, "I advised him to stay, and see something of his friends who would be crowding to London. 'My flock!' said this good shepherd, 'My dear Sir, remember my flock! "The hungry sheep look up and are not fed."' I could say nothing to such an argument; but I could not help thinking that, if Mr. Daniel Wilson had said such a thing, it would infallibly have appeared in his funeral sermon, and in his Life by Baptist Noel. But in poor Sidney's mouth it sounded like a joke." By all means let us be human, and employ the good gift of humour if God has bestowed it upon us; but let us employ it judiciously. There is such a thing as the Horatian *desipere in loco*, so deliciously rendered by Dr. Adam, of Edinburgh High School, "weel-timed daffin'"; but this is far removed from buffoonery, especially of the irreverent order.

It is good for us ministers to remember in our intercourse with the men and women committed to our charge that our business with them is to lead them to the Saviour; and in our visitation of their homes it puts a salutary restraint upon us, and saves us from unprofitable talk, if it be understood that, ere we go, we shall kneel down and pray with them. We are the Lord's representatives, and they should never meet us without somehow feeling, after they have parted from us, as though they had been in His company. Five minutes' foolish talking will lower a man's whole

ministry, and make his preaching, though ever so excellent, of none avail. That was a heavy condemnation which a caustic lady once pronounced upon her minister when she said that, when he was in the pulpit, she would like him never to come out of it, and, when he was out of it, she would like him never to go into it. Here is an instructive sentence from Owen's *Rhys Lewis:* "I like the preacher who is true to nature both in the pulpit and at home; but to hear one who has *almost* made me cry in chapel, afterwards quite make me laugh in the house, spoils the sermon for me." It is a wise rule for a minister never, if he can help it, to see any one on a Sunday evening after preaching.

My quotation to-day is from St. Bernard of Clairvaux: "Among men of the world jests are jests; in the mouth of a priest they are blasphemies."

XXVI.—PLAGIARISM

Suum Cuique.—"What should a member of a Church do who discovers that his minister is preaching other people's sermons? He is a man of culture and pretension, and of some reputation."

For Christianity's sake he should certainly call the offender to account, and put a stop to his nefarious practice. Its detection by an unbeliever would make rare sport for the Philistines. For the same reason he must proceed circumspectly, and beware of blazoning the thing abroad. I think he should take counsel with some trustworthy and well-disposed friend, and act in concert with him. They should either interview the offender or write to him, informing him of their cognisance of his doings, and requiring him to desist on pain of more drastic handling. If he be an honest man, and have done the thing inconsiderately, the experience will be a lesson to him for life; but, if he persist in the practice, he is morally corrupt, and for Christianity's sake they must report him to his ecclesiastical superiors.

What is plagiarism? In a sense we are all plagiarists. "An unmerciful critic observes," says old Isaac D'Israeli, "that there are few books to which an author can prefix his name without trespassing on his veracity: for there is not one work which is the labour of a single person. When a poet was re-

proached for his plagiarisms, he defended himself in this manner—That a painter was not less a painter, nor an architect less an architect, because the one purchased his colours, and the other his building materials. 'It is all pouring out of one bottle into another,' exclaimed Sterne—who himself stole this thought, with some others, from Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*. An ingenious writer justly enough observed that *the ancients had stolen all his best thoughts from him*." The fact thus farcically expressed is that our ideas mostly come to us from without. They are "in the air," and we inhale them in the course of reading and conversation, and then they are distilled in the alembic of our own mind and given out in fresh combinations, reinterpreted and recoloured. Even the myriad-minded Shakespeare got the material of his classical plays from Plutarch.

This, however, is not plagiarism. "No earnest thinker," says Kingsley, "is a plagiarist pure and simple. He will never borrow from others that which he has not, more or less, thought out for himself." The practice which has come under your observation is real plagiarism, and it is an immorality of the worst sort. It originates sometimes in laziness. The man fritters away the precious days, and Sunday finds him unprepared. He must preach, and, since he has no message of his own, he borrows one. There is another sort of man, who lands himself in the same plight, though he imagines himself a hard worker. He is a man of affairs, and busies himself with a multitude of petty activities—committees, public meetings, etc., and has no time for preparation. His bane is, to quote Thomas à Kempis once more, "dispersion

of heart." I am not sure that there is much to choose between the two. They are alike in this, that each is guilty of neglecting the work which has been given him to do.

I rather think, however, that in the majority of cases plagiarism is the desperate resource of ambitious incompetence. Here is a man of moderate abilities, who might do good service in an unpretentious way; but he has the gift of oratory, and gains at the outset of his career a cheap reputation as a "popular preacher." It is impossible for him to maintain his reputation by his own merit, and, since he cannot save himself by fair means, he is tempted to try foul means, and trade with other men's wares.

It is a species of embezzlement, and the consequences are disastrous. For one thing, the habit is like dram-drinking—it grows, it becomes inveterate. The penalty of using crutches is that one cannot do without them. And, again, it blasts the soul. It is a desecration of the inmost shrine. The man takes his stand before high Heaven, a conscious and deliberate impostor. The supreme inspiration of preaching is the sense that the Lord Jesus Christ is at our side, "attending," in the phrase of old Euthymius Zigabenus, "how we teach." Imagine the feeling of a man who not only has the dread of detection by his hearers, but knows that "those eyes of far perception" are surveying him with reproach and contempt!

Plagiarism is impossible for one who understands what preaching really means. A sermon is a proclamation of one's personal experience, a testimony to what the Lord has done for oneself and will do for others, if they but yield to the might of His grace. The preacher is not an essayist. He is a prophet.

His themes are indeed the veriest commonplaces—the sins and sorrows and yearnings of the human soul; but when he brings the old things out of the treasure of his heart, they are new—discoveries, revelations. A teacher who is taught of God has no lack.

My quotation to-day is from Seneca: "So live with men as if God saw; so talk with God as if men heard."

XXVII.—RAILERS AT THE MINISTRY

Perplexed.—"We have had a prolonged visit in this town from two evangelists who have been telling the people that there is no New Testament authority for churches and paid ministers. Would you kindly give us your view?"

These men are enemies of the Gospel. They are no novelty; every generation has known this plague. "What," says Richard Baxter, "are the swarms of railers at the ministry sent abroad the land for but to delude, exasperate, and disaffect the people; and turn the hearts of the children from their fathers?" It is hardly necessary to prove the falsity of their allegations.

(1) St. Paul and St. John went about founding churches and ordaining ministers, and the Pastoral Epistles were written for the guidance of ministers in the discharge of their sacred office. Read the Epistles to Timothy and Titus, and see what the Apostle says to these young ministers about the appointment of Elders and Deacons, and, moreover, about dealing with this very nuisance—"perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth."

(2) As regards the payment of ministers read 1 Cor. ix. 7–14. St. Paul calls it an ordinance of Jesus:

"The Lord ordained that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel."

The Church is a New Testament institution. She is the Lord's creation—the depositary of His grace, His abiding witness; and if she ceased, the Gospel would perish from the earth. It is no marvel that the Enemy of souls is so bitter against her. There is something very impressive about the steadfast persistence of her sacred offices from generation to generation. So many new devices come into vogue, and serve no doubt a good end while they last; but they soon die out, and the Church's ordinances remain in unimpaired vitality. The reason is that they are the Lord's appointments and not man's devices.

Your question has more than a personal and local interest: it raises a problem which calls for serious consideration on the part of all who desire the advancement of the Kingdom of our Lord; and I will venture to make some observations regarding it. In the primitive Church there was, besides the regular ministry, an order of itinerant preachers called "prophets" or "apostles." They were a recognised institution, and their function was to travel about preaching, not to the Christians, but to the heathen, and seeking to win them to faith. To avoid offence, they took nothing from the heathen, and the supply of their necessities was a duty which rested on the Church, especially the congregation in whose province they happened to be labouring. See 3 John 5–8.

It was a heroic and arduous service, but it was liable to abuse. It was usurped by "false prophets," and these impostors called forth from St. John per-

haps the sternest condemnation in the New Testament (3 John 10, 11); and it was presently necessary to lay down very stringent regulations. These are found in that early manual of Church Procedure, *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* (xi.–xii.). The trouble was that idle and ignorant persons would sometimes set up as evangelists, and, instead of preaching to the heathen, would quarter themselves upon a Christian community and disturb its peace and vex the heart of the minister by meddlesome interference.

And so three rules were laid down: (1) The test of a "prophet" is not his professions or his raptures, but his character, his likeness to the Master. "Not every one that talketh in the Spirit is a prophet, but only if he have the manners of the Lord." (2) An evangelist had to do not with believers, but with "those without." He must not intrude into a congregation or interfere with its regular ministry. "He shall remain a single day, and, if need be, the next; but if he remain three, he is a false prophet." (3) If he remains, it must be not as a teacher, but as an industrious layman. "If he wishes to settle among you, being a craftsman, let him work and eat; and if he has no craft, make provision according to your discretion that he may not live idle among you, being a Christian. If he refuses to do so, he is a trafficker on Christ: beware of such."

These are wise and wholesome regulations, and I would have them enforced now. There is ample room for earnest men to labour among the "lapsed" after the noble example of the Salvation Army, but it is intolerable that an unaccredited and irresponsible "evangelist" should invade a community and

interrupt the stated ordinances of the House of God.

My quotation to-day is from Baxter: "Alas! for grief and shame, it is most commonly men that profess more than ordinary religiousness, that are the dividers of the Church."

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

XXVIII.—THE TRUTH OF THE BIBLE

G. O. P.—"I have often been helped and comforted by your words in answer to correspondents. I hope I am not troublesome in asking this of you—what I ought to answer when a man, a Doctor, unconverted, says: 'How do we know our Bible is true?' I get hot, and say I do know, but I am not believed."

The man should be ashamed of himself. His behaviour is both ungentlemanly and silly. He knows the sorrow and loneliness of your life, and the comfort and strength which you derive from your faith, and if he were a gentleman, he would never be guilty of the unchivalry of disturbing you with doubts. He might smile at your faith, but he would be glad that you enjoyed its support. He should remember Tennyson's admonition—

> "Leave thou thy sister when she prays,
> Her early Heaven, her happy views;
> Nor thou with shadow'd hint confuse
> A life that leads melodious days."

And how silly his behaviour is! What would he think, what would he say, if some person unskilled in medicine plied one of his patients with questions about the efficacy of his prescriptions? He would not mince matters. He would say to his patient: "The fellow is a pestilent quack. He knows nothing about it. Pay

no attention to him. Trust me: I know. I cannot explain it to you, for you lack the requisite training in anatomy and chemistry and therapeutics. You must in a case like this trust the expert. I do not ask a blind and unreasonable trust. There is a test which you may apply: What is the effect of my treatment? Is it doing you good—relieving your pain and restoring your strength?"

This is the attitude which you must assume toward your troubler. He, too, is a quack, which means, according to Chambers, "a boastful pretender to skill which he does not possess." He may be skilful in his own department, though it is certainly an impeachment of his discretion that he should intrude into another where he has no special knowledge. If he had any knowledge of the science of Apologetic, any appreciation of the magnitude of the problem, he would never ask how you know that the Bible is true. It is like the challenge which the mocking Gentile addressed to the Rabbi Hillel:—"Teach me the Law while I stand on one leg, and I will become a proselyte." You cannot pack the Evidences into a neat and triumphant syllogism. The argument is essentially cumulative, and its appreciation and comprehension demand long, patient, and serious investigation.

This does not mean that only the expert student can know that the Bible is true. Here, as in medicine, there is a simple and direct test. The patient says: "I know that this treatment is right, because it does me good;" and the non-expert in Biblical Science says: "I know that the Bible is true because it is the message of God to my soul. It tells me about the Lord Jesus Christ, and it brings me into fellowship

with Him, into an actual and blessed experience of His grace and love." One of the best attested of the unwritten sayings of our Lord is this: "My mystery is for Me and the sons of My House," and it has a bearing on the question before us. Unless we know Jesus, and have been initiated into His secret, we are outsiders, and our opinions about religion are of no account. The Bible has no value in itself. It is not an end, but a way. The end is Jesus, and it is the way which leads to Him. This is its function, and its attestation is that it performs its function. It brings us to the Saviour; and then, when we know Him, we are rightly situated for understanding the Bible. We discover so much in it which was formerly hidden from us, and so much which puzzled us appears natural and fitting. It is a singularly pleasurable experience to make the acquaintance of an author after reading his book, and then read it over again. Your knowledge of him lights it up and discovers unexpected meanings. You read passages which you never noticed or pronounced foolish, and you say: "This is himself; the man speaks here." And just so with the Bible. It is the Word of Christ, and you never understand it aright until you know Him. To an unconverted man the Bible is unintelligible, and his opinions about it are valueless (cf. 1 Cor. ii. 14. "To evil persons," says Jeremy Taylor, "the whole system of this wisdom is insipid and flat, dull as the foot of a rock, and unlearned as the elements of our mother tongue; but so are mathematics to a Scythian boor, and music to a camel."

Get near to Jesus, and read the Bible in the light of His Face; and you will see its glory. It is told of the Spanish Dominican St. Vincent Ferrer

(A.D. 1357–1419) that his sermons were always composed with the Crucifix before him. And he has left two golden counsels: (1) "Never begin or end your study but by prayer." (2) "Study fatigues and drains the mind and heart. Go from time to time to refresh them at the feet of Jesus under His Cross."

My quotation to-day is from Goethe: "As for myself, I loved and valued the Bible: for almost to it alone did I owe my moral culture, and the events, the doctrines, the symbols, the similes, had all impressed themselves deeply upon me, and had influenced me in one way or another. These unjust, scoffing, and perverting attacks, therefore, disgusted me."

XXIX.—THE ULTIMATE AUTHORITY

J. G.—"Can you tell me if it is possible in these days to believe in an Ultimate Authority, and, if so, where it is to be found? The teaching of much of the new thought is that this authority is only subjective; but I cannot help feeling that that is far from satisfactory. Is there no objective authority to which I can without hesitation bow down, and to which I can point my people? Rightly or wrongly, I have come to feel recently that there is something in the Roman Catholic taunt, 'We have an Ultimate Authority; you have none.'"

This is an ancient perplexity. The human soul, compassed by the mystery of this vast universe, has always yearned for some certainty to cling to and lean upon. You remember that touching passage in Plato's discussion on the Immortality of the Soul (*Phæd.* 85 C–D): "To have clear knowledge of such things in this life is impossible, or at all events very difficult. . . . We must pursue one of these courses: either learn or discover how they stand; or, if this be impossible, take the best and most irrefragable of human arguments, and, embarking thereon as on a raft, risk the voyage of life—unless one could, with more safety and less risk, make the passage on a stronger vessel, some Divine Word." And this is

the question: Have we still no resource but human reason, or has Christianity furnished the "stronger vessel," the "Divine Word," for which the ancient philosopher yearned?

Consider the matter historically. The Romish claim is that the Ultimate Authority is an Infallible Church. The difficulty is that the Church is not and has never been infallible. The claim is an unhistorical fiction, and it was rejected by the Reformers as a mischievous superstition, engendering priestly arrogance and doctrinal corruption. It is a common idea that they put the Infallibility of the Scriptures in place of the Infallibility of the Church. This would have been the substitution of a fallacy for a fiction, the fallacy which is known as "reasoning in a circle." Thus: The Bible is the Word of God because it is true. But how do you know that the Bible is true? Because it is the Word of God.

This, however, was not the position of the Reformers. They accepted the Bible as the Word of God because it had "the Testimony of the Holy Spirit (*Testimonium Spiritus Sancti*)." Cf. 1 John v. 6. The classic exposition of their doctrine is Calvin, *Instit.* I. vii. Cf. John Owen, *The Greater Catechism.* "*Q.* 4. How do you know them (*i. e.* the books of the Old and New Testament) to be the word of God? *A.* By the testimony of God's Spirit, working faith in my heart to close with that heavenly majesty, and clear truth, that shineth in them."

The implication is that man has an innate capacity for recognising the Voice of God when he hears it, and the principle operates in lower domains. For instance, what is the Ultimate Authority in morals? Not human law, but a higher and holier ordinance—

"the law," in Cicero's great language, "not written but innate; which we have not learned, received, read, but from Nature herself grasped, drunk, expressed; whereunto we were not taught but made, not trained but imbued." "I did not think," says Antigone to the tyrant Creon in the drama of Sophocles, "that thy proclamations had such strength that, mortal as thou art, thou couldst override the unwritten and unerring ordinances of the Gods; for it is not now and yesterday but evermore that they live, and none knoweth the date of their appearing." It is because we have the Unwritten Law in our hearts that we bow before human ordinances which are good, and rebel against such as are evil, whatever external authority may enforce them. And it is because we have the testimony of the Holy Spirit in our hearts that we recognise the Voice of God when we hear it.

It may indeed be objected that there are things in the Bible which seem to lack this attestation. Are they to be rejected? And are we to pick and choose what we shall believe according to a merely subjective standard? My answer is that, while it is only so much as is brought home to us "in demonstration of the Spirit" that is truly the Word of God to our souls, it were both foolish and audacious to reject all else. For (1) it is very probably our ignorance that makes certain things seem incredible to us. Experience has taught me to be very chary of pronouncing anything incredible. There are doctrines which I once deemed impossible, but I have lived into them and they are now numbered with the certainties of my faith. And (2) some deference is surely due to the consensus of experience. *Securus judicat orbis terrarum.* It is more likely that my doubt is due to my ignorance

and the limitation of my experience than that the historic faith of Christendom is erroneous.

My quotation to-day is from Dr. Samuel Johnson: "So many objections might be made to everything, that nothing could overcome them but the necessity of doing something."

XXX.—PROBLEM OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL

C. S.—"I write to see if you would help me with regard to the problem of the Fourth Gospel. I find myself unable to accept it as equal in historical value to the Synoptics."

With your knowledge of the vastness and complexity of the problem you will not expect a settlement of it here. You have evidently been one-sided in your study, and you should read Drummond's *Character and Authorship,* and Sanday's *Criticism of the Fourth Gospel.* For my own part I am increasingly assured that the Gospel is, according to the primitive and abiding tradition, both Johannine and historical, informed, of course, by the apologetic purpose which it was designed to serve, and coloured by the intellectual atmosphere in which it was produced. Here are two considerations which, it seems to me, have been too much overlooked.

1. *The locality of our Lord's ministry in the Fourth Gospel.* The tradition is that St. John wrote his Gospel to supplement the narratives of his predecessors. And this is precisely what the Fourth Gospel does. It never traverses ground already covered by the Synoptics, save in a few cases where it makes some significant addition or needful correction. And its chief purpose, as Eusebius says, was to record the

extensive Jerusalem ministry, regarding which, except for a few hints, the Synoptics are silent. (See what I have written in *The Days of His Flesh,* pp. xxxiv. ff.)

And here, it seems to me, the striking difference in the form and spirit of our Lord's teaching in the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptics finds a reasonable and sufficient explanation. The men of Jerusalem breathed a Rabbinical atmosphere; they were all controversialists, and they were continually starting theological objections and opening theological disputations (cf. St. John vii. 20–27; viii. 13). And Jesus met them on their own ground and fought them with appropriate weapons. The Galileans, on the other hand, were an unsophisticated folk, and when He spoke to them, He used simple language, poetic and parabolic. The difference of the teaching corresponds to the difference of the audiences.

Ere you conclude that the Synoptic Jesus could not have spoken in the manner of the Johannine Jesus, consider St. Matthew xi. 25–27 = St. Luke x. 21, 22. This *logion* is throughout Johannine (cf. St. John iii. 35; xiii. 3; i. 18; vi. 46, 65; x. 15). And there are others like it; *e.g.* St. Luke xiii. 32, 33 (cf. St. John xi. 9); St. Matthew xxi. 22=St. Mark xi. 24 (cf. St. John xvi. 23); St. Matthew xxiv. 36=St. Mark xiii. 32—one of Schmiedel's "absolutely credible passages."

2. *St. John's method.* It was the artist's method, which does not lose itself in the literal reproduction of details. "Not," says Ruskin, "that the poet's impressions or renderings of things are wholly true, but their truth is vital, not formal. They are like sketches from life by Reynolds or Gainsborough, which may be demonstrably inaccurate or imaginary in many traits, and indistinct in others, yet will be in the

deepest sense like, and true; while the work of historical analysis is too often weak with loss, through the very labour of its miniature touches, or useless in clumsy and vapid veracity of externals, and complacent security of having done all that is required for the portrait, when it has measured the breadth of the forehead, and the length of the nose."

This is St. John's method—the artist's, not the draughtsman's. *E. g.*, the Synoptic Jesus always says "Verily," the Johannine Jesus always "Verily, verily." Why the reduplication? On St. Mark v. 41, where *Talitha, cumi* means simply, "Damsel, arise," John Lightfoot remarks: "In His pronunciation and utterance of these words there flashed forth such authority and commanding energy that they sounded no less than if He had said, 'Damsel, I say unto thee, arise.'" The addition is the Evangelist's attempt to reproduce the tone as well as the language of the Master. And this is precisely what St. John has done here and all through his Gospel. Jesus actually said simply, "Verily," but He said it with that authority which ever characterised His teaching (cf. St. Matthew vii. 28, 29; St. Mark i. 22, 27); and St. John tried to bring this out. Reduplication was the Hebrew way of marking emphasis (cf. Gen. xiv. 10, where the literal rendering is "pits, pits of bitumen"); and so he reduplicates the "Verily," just as a modern writer might underline it or put it in italics.

This is an instance of his constant method. He is no mere reporter; he is an artist limning for the generations to come the form of Him who

> "walked here, the shadow of Him Love,
> The speech of Him soft Music, and His step
> A Benediction,"

and striving to catch each elusive expression and suggest the atmosphere which He diffused. The Johannine portraiture is certainly less literalistic than the Synoptic, but for this very reason it is more faithful, more true to the Original. Discover the glory of Jesus, and you will accept the Fourth Gospel.

My quotation to-day is from Coleridge: "Negatively, there may be more of the philosophy of Socrates in the Memorabilia of Xenophon than in Plato: that is, there is less of what does not belong to Socrates; but the general spirit of, and impression left by, Plato, are more Socratic."

XXXI.—APPROPRIATION OF THE PROMISES

M. E.—"What exactly is meant to the individual believer by 'the promises of God'? One often hears and reads that believers should 'rest on the promises' and 'plead the promises' in prayer. May such verses as Jer. xxxi. 3 and others, spoken to the 'house of Jacob,' the 'house of Judah,' etc., be taken with a personal application by each individual believer in these days? Then one sees in collections of texts for every day in the year such verses as Deut. xxxi. 8, spoken originally by Moses to Joshua. May I plead with God that He has promised never to leave *me* or forsake *me?*"

The supreme quality of the Bible is that it is a record of human experience. The sacred writers were not the mouthpieces of a revelation out of the sky. God spoke to them and revealed His character and purposes to them in their experience; and when they wrote, they simply testified to the world what they had thus learned in the surest of all possible ways. They spoke what they knew and testified what they had seen.

Here lies the *rationale* of the Promises. There are three things in a promise: (1) an experience, (2) a principle, and (3) an inference. Consider, for example, that promise: "Let the wicked forsake his

way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon" (Isa. lv. 7). There is here, first of all, an experience. The prophet had himself been a sinner, and the Lord had showed him mercy. Behind that experience lay a principle, viz. the faithfulness of God and the constancy of His operations. The laws of Nature are fixed and immutable. What else are they but, in Martineau's phrase, God's "personal habits"? And they are invariable inasmuch as He is not capricious or arbitrary. The chemist is absolutely certain that, given the same conditions, he can repeat to-day the experiment which he performed yesterday. And, because they also are ordained by God, the laws of Grace are no less immutable than the laws of Nature. Here also, given like conditions, like results will ensue. The principle is the immutability of God, and the inference is that what He has done in one man's experience, He will repeat in His dealings with every other who has a like experience—a like need and a like faith. "I was a wicked and unrighteous man," says the prophet, "and I forsook my wicked way and my unrighteous thoughts; and the Lord had mercy upon me and abundantly pardoned me": that is the experience. And the principle is unexpressed, but it is this: "The Lord is faithful, the same yesterday and to-day, yea and for ever." "Therefore to every wicked and unrighteous man who forsakes his way and his thoughts, He will do precisely what He has done to me": this is the inference.

Analyse any promise in the Bible, and you will find in it these three elements; and thus the rule emerges: Have the old experience, and the old blessing will be

yours. But observe, the old experience *in its entirety*. In the fourth century the Emperor Theodosius committed a great crime—the massacre of some 1,500 of the citizens of Thessalonica. He came to the Church of Milan, and would have entered and participated in the Holy Communion. St. Ambrose met him at the door, and forbade him to enter until he had done public penance for his crime. The Emperor pleaded that, if he had been guilty of homicide, so had King David, the man after God's own heart. St. Ambrose sternly replied: "You have imitated David in his crime; imitate him in his repentance." This is the rule. That we may inherit the old blessing, we have need of the old experience in all its fulness—the old exercise of soul, the old repentance, faith, and obedience.

It seems to me that there is a large measure of unreasonableness and stupidity about a good deal of the pious talk which one is always hearing. For instance, that phrase "pleading the promises" is not only unscriptural, but positively foolish. The fulfilment of the promises rests not with God, but with ourselves. If we fufil the conditions, the result will certainly follow. The husbandman does not "plead the promise" that "seedtime and harvest shall not cease." No, he sows his seed and expects the result. You remember how the Lord once taught the Apostles this lesson (St. Luke xvii. 5, 6). They prayed: "Increase our faith." And what was His reply? "It is not more faith that you need," He said, "but more devotion. A very little faith will suffice to do great things, and it is by exercising the faith which you have that it is increased." The reason why we do not inherit the promises is not that God is negligent, but that we do not fulfil the conditions. Do you desire

rest? Then think of the Lord's promise: "Learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." It is stupid to pray for rest: that is not the way to gain it. The way is to fulfil the condition. Learn of Jesus; catch His spirit —His meek and lowly spirit; assume His attitude toward life—His brave, gentle, patient attitude; give over fretting and striving and repining; be willing to be made of no reputation; whatever comes, accept it lovingly and believingly as God's appointment: do this, and you will be at rest.

Thus, you see, the promises which were made to the saints of old are for you and me too; and they become ours the moment we make the spirit of the saints our own. Fulfil the condition, and the result necessarily follows. This is the principle which Henry Drummond used to call "Cause and Effect in Religion"; and it is because we do not grasp it and act upon it that our religious life is so disorderly and unsatisfying.

My quotation to-day is from Giovanni Pico della Mirandola: "Philosophy seeks for Truth; Theology finds it; Religion possesses it."

XXXII.—THE DOUBLE REFERENCE OF PROPHECY

Interpreter.—"What is the meaning of 2 Pet. i. 20, 21?"

Translate: "No prophecy of Scripture proveth to be of individual interpretation (*i. e.* applicable only to the immediate situation); for it was not by will of man that prophecy was ever borne along, but, borne along by the Holy Spirit (like a ship by wind and tide), men spake from God."

There is here a profound and far-reaching principle which sheds light on the method of revelation. I would call it the Double Reference of Prophecy. What is Prophecy? Bishop Butler defined it as "nothing but the history of events before they came to pass"; and this conception still prevails. But it is open to a grave objection. The prophets were, above all, men with a living message to their generation. They spoke to their contemporaries words of reproof, encouragement, or guidance, in view of actual and urgent circumstances. But a prediction has to do with the future, and has no present significance. It is not even intelligible until its fulfilment comes. If the prophet had simply foretold the distant future, then (1) his contemporaries would have been under no obligation to believe him; his prediction could only

be verified by the event; and (2) his message would have had no immediate bearing, no succour for the trouble of the hour; for it is sheer mockery to tell starving men that there will be no want during the Millennium.

The difficulty arises from the one-sidedness of the prevailing conception of prophecy. It is indeed true that it is "the history of events before they came to pass," but it is not the whole truth. It overlooks a principle of far-reaching significance, which was recognised by the great Fathers, and is thus stated by St. Chrysostom: "This is the law of Prophecy, that many things are many a time spoken in one connection and fulfilled in another." That is, Prophecy has a double reference. It referred primarily to actual and present circumstances, and neither the Prophet nor his hearers dreamed of any further reference; but "the Spirit of the Christ was in him," and his words had a larger significance than he knew.

Take two examples: 1. Psalm lxxii. It is primarily David's prayer for Solomon, his son and the successor to his throne; but this does not exhaust its meaning. Read verses like 5, 6, 12, 17, and do you not feel that there is only one King of Israel who ever realised their ideal? They were spoken of Solomon, but they were fulfilled in Christ, and in Christ alone. Despite the fair promise of his early days, Solomon proved a voluptuous tyrant, and brought disaster on his kingdom. So far as he was concerned, the prayer was unanswered; but it was answered beyond all expectation in another and greater Son of David a thousand years later.

2. The Song of Solomon. This exquisite gem of Hebrew literature is primarily a dramatic representa-

tion of the Trial and Triumph of Love. It tells how a northern peasant-maiden was carried off by the licentious despot, King Solomon, how she resisted his blandishments, faithful to her shepherd-lover, and how her lover sought her and found her and brought her home. It is a celebration of that human love which is the holiest thing and the likest God on earth. "Love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave; the flashes thereof are flashes of fire, a very flame of the Lord. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, he would be utterly contemned." This is the primary reference of the Song, but its ultimate reference reaches far further and infinitely higher. It is, according to St. Paul's interpretation (Eph. v. 25–33), a prophecy of Christ's loving quest for His Church, His blood-bought and holy Bride.

And it is thus with all the prophecies of the Old Testament. They have always a contemporary reference, but none of them "proveth to be of individual interpretation." The prophets spoke more largely than they knew. They meant one thing, but the Spirit of the Christ which was in them meant another and a greater thing. As every road in the Roman Empire led to Rome, so every verse in the Old Testament leads to Christ. He is the fulfilment of the Scriptures, and their ultimate and highest significance is unfolded by Him and His salvation. St. Justin Martyr expounds a quaint yet beautiful fancy of the primitive Church. The Cross, he says, is seen everywhere—in the imaginary lines across the earth's surface, from north to south and from east to west; in a bird spreading its wings to fly; in a man stretching out his arms

to swim or holding them up in prayer; in a ship's yard athwart the mast; in a galley's oars projecting on either side; in the yoke across the pole of a wagon; in the handle of a spade; in a mallet; in the fashion of the human face—the line of the eyebrows crossing the line of the nose. There is truth in this imagination of devout fancy. Christ is the ultimate truth of everything, and nothing is understood aright until He is discovered in it.

My quotation to-day is from Coleridge: "What a beautiful sermon or essay might be written on the growth of prophecy!—from the germ, no bigger than a man's hand, in Genesis, till the column of cloud gathers size and height and substance, and assumes the shape of a perfect man; just like the smoke in the Arabian Nights' tale, which comes up and at last takes a genie's shape."

THE WORK OF GRACE

XXXIII.—THE ATONEMENT

Earnest Inquirer.—"We are taught (1) that the Death of Jesus revealed the Love of God to mankind, and (2) that Jesus Christ died to satisfy 'the eternal Law of Righteousness.' My difficulty is this: How could God give His Son to satisfy Himself? Is it not similar to a man taking pence from one pocket to put in the other one?"

You will never understand the Atonement unless you view it from the standpoint of the Lord Jesus, and have the courage to accept unreservedly His teaching about God. Grasp two truths which, though ignored by what passes for "orthodoxy," are the master-thoughts of His teaching and the foundation-stones of a truly Christian theology.

1. God is the Heavenly Father, and the worst of mankind is His child—a lost child indeed, but His child none the less, and just because he is lost, the nearer to His heart and the more eagerly desired. And, let me observe in passing, "lost" is in no wise synonymous with "doomed." A lost sheep is a sheep which the shepherd is seeking, and which, if the shepherd have his way, will presently be found. The whole Gospel of grace and hope lies in that word "lost."

2. Jesus, let me once more repeat, is one with God

—one in thought, in desire, in purpose. Is not this His own declaration? "I and the Father are one"; "he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." Hence whatever was in the heart of Jesus is in the heart of God too; and there is nothing in the heart of God which is not in the heart of Jesus.

See what a clean cut this makes of the theological entanglements which are perplexing you. Theologians have insisted that God is the Moral Governor of the Universe, and Jesus made satisfaction on our behalf to His wounded honour; and again that God is an inexorable Creditor, and Jesus has paid our debt. And these are no doubt useful conceptions and, in a measure, true; but they are not distinctively Christian. They nowhere appear in the teaching of our Lord. God is there represented as our Father; and Jesus revealed His attitude toward the children of men. If you say that Jesus interposed between an angry God and guilty sinners, then, I repeat, you forget that Jesus and God are one, and you land yourself in Unitarianism; for you make Jesus different from God and therefore less than God. If Jesus and God be one, then you might as reasonably say that God propitiated Jesus as that Jesus propitiated God.

> "The homage that we render Thee
> Is still our Father's own;
> No jealous claim or rivalry
> Divides the Cross and Throne."

The fact is that, as it is commonly understood, "propitiation" is a heathen idea. The Greek word means "Mercy-seat" (cf. Heb. ix. 5), and so it should be rendered in Rom. iii. 25: "Whom God set forth as a Mercy-seat through faith in His blood"—"His blood which," in the fine phrase of St. Ignatius, "is

immortal love." And it cannot be too often repeated that the New Testament never speaks of Christ reconciling God to the world. It always puts it precisely the other way and says that He reconciled the world to God. And this makes an infinite difference. It means that the enmity is all on our side, and the Atonement is God's gracious overture of peace, His supreme effort to break down the barrier of our distrust and bridge the gulf of our alienation. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." It is the work of Jesus; but God was behind Jesus, and whatever Jesus did, God did too.

And it is all so divinely simple if only you conceive of God as the Heavenly Father manifested in His Eternal Son. You see where the Sacrifice comes in —inevitably comes in. The Parable of the Prodigal Son is our Lord's picture of God's attitude toward sinners, and there is nothing in it about an angry God who would not forgive without satisfaction to His wounded honour; nor can the idea be brought in by way of supplement, for it is contrary to the fundamental conception of the parable. But was there no sacrifice? Yes, there was a sacrifice, though not in the way that old Euthymius Zigabenus makes out when, with unconscious profanity, he interprets "the fatted calf" as "the holy body of Christ." The whole Atonement, the whole philosophy of Redemption, lies in that immortal story; and ah! the pity of it, that theologians have missed the wonderful truth and troubled our hearts with their stupid theorisings! Did the son's misdoing cost the father nothing? It well-nigh broke his heart, and the measure of his suffering is his gladness when the wanderer returned. And this is the Atoning Sacrifice—the sorrow which

His foolish children's sin has cost the Heavenly Father, and the travail which He has endured in bringing them home. Oh, we err, we greatly err, when we call it a sacrifice to "satisfy the eternal Law of Righteousness"! It is no such thing. It is a sacrifice to satisfy the yearning of Eternal Love.

When the good Earl of Derby lay a-dying, he was attended by his housekeeper, a pious Methodist, and she would talk with him and read to him. Once she was reading the hymn: "All ye that pass by," and when she reached the lines—

> "The Lord in the day of His anger did lay
> Our sins on the Lamb, and He bore them away,"

the Earl interrupted. "Stop! Don't you think, Mrs. Brass, that ought to be, 'The Lord in the day of His *mercy* did lay'?" That hits the mark. It would make a blessed difference in our theology and would restore the lost power to our preaching if only we grasped the truth which is written on every page of the New Testament, that Jesus is "the Visible Image of the Invisible God," and that nothing is true of God which is not true of Jesus—no matter who says it. If it be true that behind everything lies the Love which died for desire of us on the Cross of Calvary, what is there in life or death or Eternity that we need to fret about or be afraid of?

My quotation to-day is from George MacDonald: "No theology, except the Θεοῦ λόγος, is worth the learning, no other being true. To know *Him* is to know God."

XXXIV.—THE DERELICTION

H. E. K.—"What did Jesus mean by His quotation from the Cross of Psalm xxii. 1? It seems difficult to reconcile the 'forsaking' with the oneness of Father and Son."

This is the most mysterious passage in the Holy Scriptures. Here we have a glimpse into the soul of our Blessed Lord at the supreme crisis of His conflict with the sin of the world; and to one who truly recognises Him as the Eternal Son of God incarnate, it must seem nothing short of blasphemous audacity to dogmatise about it, or employ it as a "proof-text" in support of the theory of the Atonement. Three main interpretations have been put upon it by those who accept it as authentic.

1. The naturalistic interpretation. It was a confession of defeat. "He regarded his fate as the shipwreck of His holiest hopes" (Montefiore). "He endured an agony of despair," says Renan, "a thousand times more acute than all His torture. He saw only the ingratitude of men; He perhaps repented suffering for a vile race."

2. The humanistic interpretation. It was a cry of human weakness. His soul was clouded by the sore anguish of His flesh and spirit, and His faith in God, hitherto victorious, gave way. He imagined Himself

forsaken. But it was only an imagination, and His experience is our reassurance in every hour of darkness. God never forsakes His people, and it is our weakness that makes us think He has forsaken us. If the faith of the Well-beloved Son failed, what wonder that ours fails too? This interpretation is finely expressed in Mrs. Browning's *Cowper's Grave*.

3. The theological interpretation. He was enduring vicariously the wrath of God. This theory is mercilessly but not unfairly stated by the late Dr. Martineau in a terrible passage: "The anguish which He endured is not chiefly that which falls so poignantly on the eye and ear of the spectator. . . . He is judicially abandoned by the infinite Father, who expends on Him the immeasurable wrath due to an apostate race, gathers up into one hour the lightnings of eternity, and lets them loose upon that bended head. It is the moment of retributive justice, the expiation of all human guilt; that open brow hides beneath it the despair of millions of men, and to the intensity of agony there, no human wail could give expression." If there be any of my readers who holds by this theory and accounts it orthodox, I submit to his consideration Calvin's statement: "We do not suggest that God was ever His adversary, or angry with Him. For how should He be angry with His Beloved Son, in whom His mind rested?" God was never angry with Jesus, certainly never on His own account, and as certainly never on ours. For, while punishment is transferable, wrath is not. How could God conceivably determine to lift His wrath from sinners, and be angry with His sinless Son instead? Jesus was always the Beloved Son in whom the Father was well

pleased, and never so absolutely as in that hour when He hung on the Cross, a willing Sacrifice, obedient to the Father's Will even unto death.

I decline to theorise about the Dereliction; but I may say that this and much else would be simplified by a truer conception of the Person of our Lord in the days of His flesh. According to the Apostolic teaching, it was needful for Him, that He might redeem us, to identify Himself with us in all our misery, and make it all His own (cf. Heb. ii. 14). "What is unassumed," says St. Gregory of Nazianzus, "is unhealed." Therefore He became man, and lived a human life. And the Incarnation was a reality. Jesus was not God walking the earth in human aspect; He was not God and man; He was *God become man,* the Word made flesh. And He was subject to all our sinless limitations. He wrought His miracles, not by His own power, but by the power of God, "because God was with Him" (Acts x. 38), and "the Father abiding in Him did His works" (St. John xiv. 10). His every superhuman faculty in the days of His flesh was a ministration of God; and if at any moment God had ceased from His ministration, Jesus would have been impotent, like any of the children of men. Deny this, and you land yourself in the heresy of Doketism. The wonder of Jesus was His Sacrifice —the glory which lay behind Him in the eternal years, and which He had resigned for us men and our redemption. Now, the hardest of human experiences is the passage through the Dark Valley; and, that He might be our Comrade in that sore strait, Jesus had to pass there alone in mortal weakness. He had to face that grim ordeal with no special aid, "treading the winepress alone." And so it happened,

When Jesus was going down into the Shadow, the Father stayed His hand; He refrained from His ministration. It was not anger; it was merely a suspension of that singular visitation, that special grace, which Jesus had hitherto enjoyed, which had been accorded to Him for the accomplishment of His Messianic ministry. I might say more, but perhaps I have said enough to suggest what is in my mind.

My quotation to-day is from Rothe: "First you put a coat on Christianity which makes a caricature of it, and then you are surprised and indignant when people turn their backs on it in disgust and scoff at it."

XXXV.—CONVERSION

A. E. R.—"What is Conversion? And how can it be attained?"

It is a supreme necessity, since no one is born a Christian, or rather, to be a Christian, one must be "born again," and this regeneration is Conversion. It is a distinctive idea of the New Testament. "The Old World," says Carlyle, "knew nothing of Conversion; instead of an *Ecce Homo,* they had only some *Choice of Hercules.*" The Greek philosophers reckoned Wisdom man's "highest good," and their method was Instruction. Thus they divided mankind into two classes: their disciples and "the many," *i. e.* the ignorant multitude. And they made a further classification. The more apt of their disciples were initiated into the profounder mysteries of philosophy, while the less apt had to be content with rudimentary instruction. Thus in every school there were two circles of disciples—an inner and an outer, an Esoteric and an Exoteric. The teaching of our Lord, on the other hand, was not a philosophy but a Gospel. It said, not "Be instructed," but "Be redeemed, be born again, turn and live, be converted."

The essence of the contrast is this, that Instruction is a matter of mere self-culture, and is possible only for such as have a certain intellectual endowment;

whereas Conversion is the work of God, and is possible for every one who will yield himself to the grace of God in Jesus Christ. The word means "turning about," and it suggests the image of a lost wanderer. The wilderness is wide and perilous, and the night is at hand, and the pitiful Saviour has pursued the wandered and is calling after him: "Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?" And Conversion is just turning at the call and obeying it. It is a personal matter—not acceptance of a creed, but surrender to the will and guidance of Jesus. And this is what makes Conversion so easy, reasonable, and indeed natural. Whatever may be said about metaphysical theories and theological definitions, Jesus appeals to our deepest nature; our hearts go out to Him instinctively and hail Him as their Friend and Lord, and confess how good He is. Turning to Him and accepting Him is just letting our hearts have their way and allowing our true selves to rise up and live. And this is Conversion. It is the soul approaching and welcoming Jesus.

You ask how Conversion may be attained. Turn up the hymn, "Just as I am"; read it, understand it, make its prayer your own, and, when you have got to the last word, say "Amen" to it with all your heart; and the covenant is sealed; you are Christ's and He is yours.

Conversion is a crisis, the turning-point in a man's life, and it is helpful ever after if he is able to look back to the hour when he made the great Surrender and the light broke into his soul. But it should be said with all emphasis that this is not necessary. There are many who have no such remembrance; yet they are Christians, resting on the Lord's mercy, and

living in His faith and peace. Their Scriptural prototype is not St. Paul, but Samuel or Timothy. They cannot recall a time when they were not desiring Jesus and seeking to be right with Him and order their lives according to His will. They are the children of believers. They were consecrated by prayer and faith ere they were born, and were nurtured in a godly atmosphere, in a home which was a little sanctuary with an altar and a mercy-seat. And they grew into the love of Jesus without any rude crisis in their spiritual experience, any painful transition "out of darkness into light."

I think this is the ideal sort of Conversion, the sort which we should covet for our children, and by our own faith and devotion make possible for them. What better thing could we desire for them than this, that, when they are old and grey-headed, they should look back and say with thankful hearts: "I have never known what it means to be a stranger to the love of Jesus. I do not remember a time when I was not His"? The decisive question is not "When was I converted?" but rather, "What is my present attitude to Christ? Am I at this hour resting on Him and seeking to be true to Him in all the business of my life?" If we can say "Yes" to that, then we are truly converted. And if doubts assail us, questionings whether we be really His, here is the secret of reassurance: Go back to Him as you went at the first, and say, "Lord, if I have never come aright, I come now." Bunyan found peace when the Holy Spirit brought home to his heart that promise of Jesus: "Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out"; and whenever in after days he doubted, he would pray this prayer: "Take me, for I come unto Thee." With

this prayer on his lips he died. Yes, Conversion means "turning to Jesus," and we have need to be continually turning to Him and casting ourselves afresh on His unfailing mercy. "The perseverance of the saints is made up of ever new beginnings."

My quotation to-day is from Bunyan: "It is profitable for Christians to be often calling to mind the very beginnings of grace with their souls."

XXXVI.—A SENSE OF GUILT

N. H. F.—"I have been a Christian for years, although a very imperfect one. On every hand now I read and hear that in order to a sound Christian life one must have a profound sense of his guilt. But whilst what I read and hear quite convinces me that this is necessary, nowhere do I find anything calculated to awaken this sense of guilt within me. Can you mention any book that will help me?"

I rather think you are disquieting yourself in vain. Of course, a sense of sin is necessary. As Seneca puts it in language which is almost Pauline, "the beginning of salvation is the recognition of sin." We will not seek the Saviour unless we feel our need of Him, and the sense of our unworthiness grows with our perception of His glory. It seems to me, however, that much needless discouragement is occasioned both to seekers after Christ and to Christians by inconsiderate and unguarded insistence on the necessity of "a profound sense of guilt."

1. It is this that keeps many back from Christ. "I would like," they say, "to be a Christian, but I don't feel myself 'the chief of sinners.'" No, and it is not necessary that they should. The one question is: Have we so much sense of our need of Christ that we want Him and are willing to accept Him? That is

enough, and it is the Enemy of our souls who bids us hold back because we are not sufficiently penitent and contrite. "The Devil," says Santa Teresa, "tries to make us think we have humility, when in reality he is trying to make us distrust God." You remember how the hymn puts it:

> "Let not conscience make you linger,
> Nor of fitness fondly dream;
> All the fitness He requireth
> Is to feel your need of Him."

One of the lessons of the parable of the Prodigal Son is that our motives for coming to Christ matter little, if only we come. He receives us and never asks what has brought us. You remember what brought the prodigal home to his father. It was the misery of his condition. He had never a qualm of conscience, never a regret for the base part he had played and the grief he had caused his father. If his money had lasted, he would have stayed in the far country. Selfish in his sin, he was selfish in his repentance. All he wanted was bread. "How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare! I will arise and go to my father." It was this that brought him home, and he never truly repented till his father's arms were about his neck. And it is quite enough that we should come to Christ, whatever brings us. When we have come, He will teach us all that we have need to learn. The fact is that we never really repent until we know the love of Christ. Cf. Job xlii. 5, 6.

2. If we are Christians, it is both a mistake and a serious impediment to our growth in grace to keep coveting a particular experience and wondering why it is not granted to us. It is a mistake, for every one

is an individual, and travels by his own road, and has his own experience. A man's past determines his experience as a Christian. St. Augustine had been a great sinner, and found peace in the mercy of Christ, and his past coloured his new life: sin and salvation were the themes of his teaching. Clement of Alexandria, on the other hand, had been a philosopher, a seeker after truth. He found it in Christ, and his teaching was an exhibition of Christ as the Truth, showing how He satisfies the restless intellect and gives what human wisdom all down the ages had been seeking and had never found. He had not, and he could not have, St. Augustine's poignant sense of sin. "If ever I am permitted to resume preaching," said a minister who lay dying of a lingering and painful sickness, "I will preach more than I have ever done of the comfort of believing." Christ is to each what each has found Him. To the soul which has sunk in the mire, He is a Saviour; to the intellect which has wrestled with doubt, He is a Guide; to the heart which has sorrowed, He is a Comforter. Each should travel his appointed road, and accept and employ the experience which it brings. It is thus that we grow in grace. It should not surprise you, if you are a Clement, that you are a stranger to Augustine's experience, nor, if you are an Augustine, that you are a stranger to Clement's. Else the consequence must be either that you will doubt the reality of your interest in Christ, or that you will deceive yourself, using language which is true on your neighbour's lips but has no counterpart in your own experience. Surrender yourself to the dominion of Jesus, and accept what He sends.

Nevertheless the plague is in every man's heart, and

it is good to know it, and you would do well to read John Owen's *The Grace and Duty of Being Spiritually Minded.*

My quotation to-day is from Juan de Avila: "There is no book so efficacious towards the instructing of a man in all virtue and in abhorrence of all sin as the Passion of the Son of God."

XXXVII.—THE CONFESSIONAL

Abingdon (a minister).—"I would be very glad to know what you consider John xx. 23 to mean."

The underlying principle is the union between Christ and His Church. He is the Head, the Church is His Body, and each believer is a member of His Body (cf. Eph. v. 30; 1 Cor. vi. 15, xii. 12; Rom. xii. 5). The union is intimate and sensitive. As the Head feels the smart of the meanest member, so Christ shares the suffering of the humblest believer (cf. 1 Cor. xii. 26; Col. i. 24). And thus it is written that, when Saul of Tarsus persecuted the disciples, it was Jesus whom he was persecuting (Acts ix. 1, 6), and whatever is done unto one of the least of His brethren, is done unto Him (St. Matthew xxv. 40, 45). And, as the Head shares the life of the members, so, conversely, the members share the life of the Head. One spirit animates the entire organism. The Church is Christ's witness on the earth; she is His representative; and whatever she does in His name has His sanction: it is His act. When she speaks, it is His Spirit that speaks in her (St. Matthew x. 20= St. Mark xiii. 11=St. Luke xii. 12); and her decisions are ratified in Heaven (St. Matthew xviii. 18).

This is the ideal, but it is realised only in so far as

the Church abides in the unity of the Mystic Body and is animated by the Spirit of her Divine Head. It is a twofold unity:

(1) The unity of the members with one another (cf. 1 Cor. xii. 24, 25). This thought is strikingly expressed in that saying of our Lord: "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in Heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them" (St. Matthew xviii. 19, 20). The point here is that fellowship eliminates the personal element. God will not grant a selfish petition; and if we pray in fellowship, we shall ask only such things as serve the general interest. (2) The unity between the members and the Head. It is only as she is animated by Christ's Spirit that the Church's acts are His acts —that her sentence of absolution or condemnation is endorsed by Him. See how this is taught in the passage before us. First of all, the Lord "breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost"; and then He said: "Whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."

Here lies the error of the ecclesiastical institution of the Confessional. It confers on the priest an absolute authority to "bind and loose"—a magical power residing in the priest himself. He may be an unspiritual, even an immoral man; nevertheless, he possesses that authority in virtue of his ordination. Historically viewed, the institution is not Christian; it is neither apostolic nor primitive. It was first established in the Church by that imperious pontiff, Pope Innocent III, at the Lateran Council in 1215, when

the doctrine of Transubstantiation was also formulated as an article of faith. Of course, confession had always been required; but it had hitherto been sufficient that the penitent should confess his sin to God. Henceforth, however, the Church recognised no other way of pardon than priestly absolution. The decree runs thus: "Let every believer of either sex, after arrival at years of discretion, faithfully confess alone all his sins, at least once a year, to his own priest, and study to fulfil to the utmost the penance enjoined upon him; otherwise, let him while living be debarred from entrance to the Church, and at death lack Christian burial."

The result, if not the design, of the decree was the establishment of priestly despotism over the souls of men; and it was facilitated by the abiding need of the human heart. God seems so remote, and the penitent craves some assurance to lean upon. Here priestcraft finds its opportunity. The true priestly office is to assure the penitent of God's mercy in Christ, and point him to the Cross; but priestcraft usurps Christ's place. The Confessional enslaves the soul and keeps it weak.

Nevertheless, there is an efficacy in confession, and it is often helpful for weak souls to tell their story not only to God, but to a fellow-man—not an official person, but a wise and tender man of God. It steadies and strengthens them to have such a confessor and know that he is sympathising with them, praying for them, and expecting them to persevere and prevail. You know how good it is for a child when he has a father in whom he can confide with no fear of upbraiding. And we are all to the last like children, weak and troubled, craving sympathy, needing a

strong breast to lean upon. A confessor of this sort helps one to believe in Christ.

But who is sufficient for the office? The strongest of us is so feeble, the bravest so fearful, the wisest so bewildered. The best help that any mortal can give his fellows is to point them to the Saviour who is his own refuge and strength. For, after all, there is no Confessor but Jesus.

My quotation to-day is from Luis de Granada: "If at any time thou dost stumble and fall, and, through weakness, dost faint, do not discourage thyself, nor cast away thy hope; but albeit thou fall a thousand times in a day, rise again and be renewed a thousand times in a day; and in what place thy thread was broken, knit it together again, and go not back to the beginning."

XXXVIII.—SINS OF IGNORANCE

Tunbridge.—"Will you kindly explain 1 Tim. i. 13: 'Because I did it ignorantly in unbelief'? Does it mean that, had Paul done these things *wilfully*, there would have been no pardon?"

The intention does not alter the act, but it qualifies the guilt. *Ohne Wissen*, says the German proverb, *ohne Sünde*, "Where there is no knowledge, there is no sin."

The rule holds in the affairs of common life. You remember, for example, how Shakespeare's King Henry V explored the camp at Agincourt *incognito* in the darkness, and the soldier Williams hectored him and picked a quarrel with him, and took his glove for a gage and wore it in his bonnet. By and by came the *éclaircissement*, and Williams was charged with treason. "All offences, my lord," he pleaded, "come from the heart: never came any from mine that might offend your majesty. . . . Your majesty came not like yourself; you appeared to me but as a common man; witness the night, your garments, your lowliness; and what your highness suffered under that shape, I beseech you, take it for your own fault, and not mine: for had you been as I took you for, I made no offence; therefore, I beseech your highness, pardon me." "Here," cried the king,

> "fill this glove with crowns,
> And give it to this fellow.—Keep it, fellow;
> And wear it for an honour in thy cap."

The soldier's behaviour was *lèse majesté*, but he was absolved because he had done it ignorantly.

This principle is constantly observed in God's dealings with men, and the recognition of it explains much that is difficult in the Scriptures. It explains, for instance, what are called "the immoralities of the Old Testament"—the polygamy and concubinage of the patriarchs, the massacre of the Canaanites, and the like. Of course, these things are abominable, and they would be unpardonable under the law of Christ; but that law was unknown in those early days, and, says St. Paul, "sin is not imputed when there is no law." And this goes to the heart of the problem of the Unpardonable Sin. "Whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him" (St. Matthew xii. 32, R.V.). The glory of the Son of Man was veiled, and it was possible in the days of His flesh to reject Him and believe that in persecuting Him and His cause one was doing God service. So thought Saul of Tarsus (Acts xxvi. 9). And when the soldiers were nailing Him to the Cross, seeing in Him nothing but a rebel against the Roman law, Jesus prayed: 'Father, forgive them; *for they know not what they do*." But it altered the situation when the Holy Spirit revealed the glory of Jesus to the man. Then, if he continued his resistance, he was "quenching the Holy Spirit," "disobeying the heavenly vision," choking his conscience and trampling on the instincts of his spiritual nature. This is blasphemy against the Spirit, and for this there is no forgiveness, since it blasts the soul.

Guilt is conditioned by knowledge and intention.

There is, says St. Paul, a conflict in the believer between the Law of God and the Law of Sin, the law of his mind and the law of the flesh. He may be mastered by the latter and obey it, while loathing it all the time and desiring to obey the former; and this is an extenuation of his sin. "It is no more I that do it, but sin which dwelleth in me" (see Rom. vii. 7–25). What counts is not the act, but the intention. Bunyan has given classic expression to this truth in his immortal allegory, where he tells how, as the pilgrim was going through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, "one of the wicked ones got behind him, and stepped up softly to him, and whisperingly suggested many grievous blasphemies to him, which he verily thought had proceeded from his own mind. This put Christian more to it than anything that he had met with before, even to think that he should now blaspheme Him that he loved so much before; yet if he could have helped it, he would not have done it; but he had not the discretion either to stop his ears or to know from whence those blasphemies came."

God looks not at our achievement, but at our aspiration; not at what we are, but at what we would fain be. Here is the old doctrine of Imputed Righteousness: He sees us not as we are in ourselves, but as we are in Christ. Christ is the ideal of redeemed humanity, and the goal toward which we are tending and which we shall one day attain is the "perfect man, the fulness of the stature of Christ." This is no theological fiction, but a reasonable—the only reasonable—estimate. Two fields lie side by side in the springtime, one green with grass, the other scarred with plough and harrow. It is the latter, though brown and bare, that the farmer surveys with gladness; for

he knows that the seed is sprouting in its bosom, and he sees it, not as it is, but as it shall be in the autumn, covered with golden grain.

My quotation to-day is from Thomas à Kempis: "God considers rather the greatness of one's motive than the greatness of one's performance."

XXXIX.—THE TRANSFIGURATION OF THE CURSE

J. D. (Canada).—"If a man who has sinned against his own body, and thereby weakened it considerably, be pardoned through Christ, and if he were surrendering himself to Him and asking that He should heal his body and give him his strength back, do you think He will grant it to him?"

Christ will not, according to His normal method, work a miracle in such a case. Whatever healing may come will come by the operation of physical laws and the employment of such remedies as science and skill provide. Parsimony is a law of the Providential Order. God is the grand Economist of the Universe, and nothing is ever wasted, ever "cast as rubbish to the void," in His working. The autumnal leaves, which litter the ground and are scattered by the rude winds, decay and vanish out of sight; but they do not perish; not a fibre of them is lost. They drop on the kindly bosom of Mother Earth, and they are taken into the laboratory of Nature and transformed by the alchemy of her mysterious processes. And, by and by, they reappear. The mantle in which Nature arrays herself each springtime is the worn-out fabric

of by-gone summers, taken down, rewoven, and dyed in fresh beauty.

This is God's law of Parsimony in the domain of Nature, and it operates also in the domain of Grace. To each man there is given one and only one life; and if he wastes it, and then repents and is forgiven, Christ does not give him a second life. He says to him: "Take up your wasted life, and repair it and fashion it anew; and I will pour upon it My healing grace." It is because we fail to recognise this law that we are discouraged by the difficulties of the Christian life, and wonder if there be any reality in salvation when we find the old passions so strong within us after we have believed. We forget that conversion is only the beginning: it does not sever us from the past; and after we have repented and believed, our old lives, so broken and mutilated, are the material which we must work with, and, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, repair and refashion. It is a hard task, impossible without the succour and reinforcement of grace; and the New Testament warns us of this in a variety of ways, telling us, for example, that the Christian life is a warfare, and bidding us "work out our own salvation with fear and trembling" in reliance upon God, who "worketh in us." As I have said, the work goes on in accordance with physical laws; and it is a blessed fact that there is healing in Nature, and, within limits, restoration. It may be that, when a man abandons the sin which has been corrupting his flesh and enfeebling his frame, his body will recover its former health and energy; but often the evil has gone too far: the damage is permanent, too serious for the recuperative power of

Nature; and the man must bear the scars and mutilations to his grave. It is a solemn fact that the past is fixed; as the Greek proverb says, the one thing which the gods themselves cannot do is to undo what has once been done. His repentance could not cancel Esau's forfeiture of his birthright; and no repentance will repair a hopelessly enfeebled constitution.

What, then, is the profit of repenting and believing? It is this: that, if it keeps him mindful of his sin and the Saviour's mercy, it disciplines the man's soul. Was not the memory of the wrong which he had done, and could never undo, St. Paul's strongest incentive in the years of his devotion to the cause which he had persecuted? Christ bids us accept ourselves as we are, without vain repining over our wasted past or impotent fretting against its inevitable entail of suffering. And when we do this, bearing ourselves gently and believingly, our wounds heal, and even the ineradicable scars get transfigured. It is like what happens to the ruin which the kindly hand of Time clothes with soft moss and so transfigures that it becomes an ornament of the landscape.

Such is the work of grace even where restoration is impossible; and the Lord's promise is that when this torn vesture of mortal flesh falls from us, we shall be clothed in the Father's House with bodies like unto His glorious body. Is it not a blessed assurance that, if only we bear it gently and believingly, the suffering which our sin has brought upon us proves a preparation for a larger and fuller life in the Paradise of God? It is surely the supreme triumph of grace that it brings eternal gain out of present loss.

My quotation to-day is from St. Bernard of Clair-

vaux: "Without the grace of God preventing, accompanying, and co-operating, we can do no good. The grace of God prevents us that we may will the good; it accompanies us that we may begin the good; it co-operates with us that we may accomplish the good."

XL.—PREDESTINATION

Scholaris.—"Acts xiii. 48: 'As many as were ordained to eternal life believed.' Surely this passage strongly supports the Calvinistic doctrine of Election."

Yes, and not this passage only but many others. Election is not simply a theological doctrine, but a fact of history and experience. What is history but the working out of God's sovereign purpose not only in spite of but by means of human opposition? And are we not continually realising that our lives have been shaped by a power outside of us? "How little freedom of choice," says Renan, "man has in the ordering of his destiny! When no more than a child who acts from impulse and the sense of imitation, one is called upon to stake one's whole existence; a higher power entangles you in indissoluble toils; this power pursues its work in silence, and before you have begun to know your own self, you are tied and bound, you know not how. When you reach a certain age, you wake up and would like to move. But it is impossible; your hands and arms are caught in inextricable folds. It is God Himself who holds you fast." "A leaf," says the Spanish proverb, "stirs not on the tree without the will of God."

I am glad to know this; for the God who is shaping my destiny is no blind and ruthless Fate, but the

Father without whom "not a sparrow falleth to the ground," and who loves me with the love which died for me on Calvary. My times are in His hand, and His appointments, though often stern, are wise and good. Remember Carlyle's story of old David Hope, the farmer by Solway shore—"a wet country with late harvests sometimes incredibly difficult to save. David's stuff was all standing dry, ready to be saved still if he stood to it, which was much his intention. Breakfast, wholesome hasty porridge, was soon over, and next in course came family worship. David was putting on his spectacles when somebody rushed in. 'Such a raging wind risen will drive the stooks (shocks) into the sea if let alone.' 'Wind!' answered David. 'Wind canna get ae straw that has been appointed mine. Sit down and let us worship God.'" If God be God, He has foreseen and foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.

This, however, is only one side of the truth. Man is not a pawn on the chessboard moved by an invisible hand without choice or responsibility; for human freedom also is a fact, as conscience and experience testify. "Sir," says Samuel Johnson, "we *know* our will is free, and there's an end on't." How God's sovereignty and man's freedom are compatible we cannot tell. We shall discover this when we gain the larger prospect of Eternity; but meantime we must acquiesce in what Kant terms "an irreconcilable antinomy." And this is not an irrational attitude, but a most reasonable recognition of our present limitations. Encompassed, as we are, by impenetrable mystery, it is foolish to reject whatever does not square with our intellectual postulates; and the fact is that there is much in our daily experience which,

though we unquestioningly accept it and continually act upon it, is not only unintelligible but demonstrably impossible. You remember those famous paralogisms, the Demonstrations of Zeno. One, based on the philosophical principles of the indestructibility of matter and the infinite divisibility of space, was that, if fleet Achilles run a race with the tortoise, and give the latter a start, he will never overtake it. Say he runs ten times faster than it and gives it a start of a hundred yards. When he has run a hundred yards, it has run ten; when he has run ten yards more, it has run one; when he has run one more, it has run a tenth; and so *ad infinitum*, however far he may run, it is always a tenth ahead. The demonstration is logically irrefragable, but it is contrary to experience; and it is by experience that we must go. Whatever logic may say, Election and Freedom are both facts, and it becomes us to accept both and get the good out of both, and refuse to be hoodwinked by a logical juggle.

Of course Election may be and has been so taught as to be nothing else than "a horrible decree," ministering either self-righteousness or despair; but, when correlated with the fact of human freedom and rooted in the eternal love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord, it seems to me a most comforting evangelical doctrine. It is the guarantee of the Perseverance of the Saints, since

> "what began best, can't end worst,
> Nor what God blessed once, prove accurst."

And it is an encouragement to timid souls to venture all on the mercy of God in Christ, since He has a purpose concerning them, and it is a purpose of love. "I would rather," says George MacDonald, "be what God chose to make me, than the most glorious crea-

ture I could think of." And it is written of Zachary Macaulay that "events did not discompose him, because they were sent by One who best knew His own purposes. He was not fretted by the folly of others, or irritated by their hostility, because he regarded the humblest or the worst of mankind as objects, equally with himself, of the divine love and care."

My quotation to-day is from W. E. H. Lecky: "The game of life is one of blended chance and skill. The best player will be defeated if he has hopelessly bad cards, but in the long run the skill of the player will not fail to tell."

DOUBT

XLI.—CHRIST AND DOUBT

Fides (Sheffield).—"What is the attitude of Christ to 'honest doubt'? Does He condemn it? Is it always avoidable?"

It is certainly unavoidable for every one who thinks and feels. Unquestioning faith is not faith at all, but mere traditionalism. Faith is not received, but won, and it is maintained in face of the God-denying aspect of the world only by strenuous and incessant activity of intellect and heart. To my mind, there is something of exhilaration in the thought that every man must penetrate for himself the mystery of life, and win his own way to assurance. The quest and the discovery are ever new and ever wonderful. Assuredly the Lord looks with a kindly and sympathetic eye on the soul's struggles. Honest doubt is a search after the Truth, and, since He is the Truth, it is a search after Him.

"It is possible," you say, "for men to reach a high level of character without holding the Christian belief in its entirety. What is to be said of people of a low type of character who are honest in their doubt? Is their low life inevitable without the Christian dynamic and the Christian faith?" I fear there are people of a low type of character who accept the Christian creed, untroubled by doubt; and the truth, it seems to me, is that the Christian dynamic flows not from

acceptance of a creed, but from one's personal attitude toward the Lord Jesus Christ. Consider two significant facts:

(1) The creed of the first disciples was, to begin with, very meagre. The Jews never expected that the Messiah would be divine. "We all," says Trypho the Jew, in Justin Martyr's Dialogue, "expect that the Christ will be born a man of man." They pictured Him only as a mighty Deliverer, peculiarly endowed by God, a King of David's lineage who should drive out the heathen and set up David's throne in more than its ancient splendour. When Peter and John and their comrades accepted Jesus as the Messiah, this was all that they believed about Him. It was not till after the Resurrection that they recognised His deity. Yet He accepted them as His disciples on these terms, with that very inadequate theological equipment, and went on instructing them in the things of His Kingdom and preparing them for the grand discovery which awaited them when the Holy Spirit came and opened the eyes of their understanding. When a man came to Jesus in the days of His flesh, He did not present him with a creed and demand his acceptance of it as the condition of discipleship. He said simply, "Follow Me"; and if the man was willing to make the great surrender and cast in his lot with the homeless Son of Man, that was enough. The condition of discipleship was not theological orthodoxy, but personal devotion. Of course this was merely the beginning, and those who entered the school of Jesus were initiated ever more fully into the mystery of His Person and Work until they attained the perfect Revelation; but He received them in their ignorance if only they were willing to sit at His feet.

(2) Our hymn-books are a standing protest against the unscriptural tendency to make creed the test of discipleship. They contain "O Saviour, bless us," and other hymns by Faber, and Faber was a Roman Catholic. They contain "Rock of Ages," by Toplady, and "Jesus, Lover of my soul," by Wesley, and Toplady was a Calvinist and Wesley an Arminian. They contain "Nearer, my God, to Thee," by Sarah F. Adams, and she was a Unitarian. Yet we sing all these hymns with no sense of incongruity, and the reason is that they are outpourings of the soul, and the soul, in Tertullian's fine phrase, is "naturally Christian." What makes men one is not theological agreement, but longing after Christ.

And this is what makes men Christians. He accepted Peter and John though they had no knowledge as yet of His deity, because they loved and desired Him, and were willing to have Him as their Master; and He recognises as His own still all who, however defective in creed and perplexed by doubt, own His moral supremacy and feel their hearts go out to Him in yearning and love. You remember Browning:

> "What matter though I doubt at every pore,
> Head-doubts, heart-doubts, doubts at my fingers' end—?
> All's doubt in me; where's break of faith in this?
> It is the idea, the feeling and the love."

And you remember how St. Paul pronounces a benediction on "all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."

My quotation to-day is from G. J. Romanes: "It is a general, if not a universal, rule that those who reject Christianity with contempt are those who care not for religion of any kind."

XLII.—THE ECLIPSE OF FAITH

W. E. G.—"The daughter of a (late) minister and a member of our church, one of a large family, and nurse to my dear old mother, with her simple and beautiful faith, my faith has ebbed away, and I feel how serious and paralysing it is to have lost, though perhaps I never really had, a reason for the faith that once I thought I held. The withdrawal of the old vitalising ideas is a trial of the first order. All other trials grow less beside it."

Yes, I know that road. Believe me, it is the way to a large and wealthy place; and, if only you bear yourself honestly, bravely, and patiently, eschewing arrogance and precipitance, you will emerge into the light with a nobler, purer, and holier faith. As trouble strengthens character, so doubt strengthens faith. I dare not give you directions, for every one must find the way for himself; but what has helped one may help another, and I venture to show you how I have been helped.

Just consider how far it is possible to go on the road of doubt; and I think you will discover certain ultimate realities which cannot be shaken, and on which you may build for your soul a house of ever ampler dimensions.

(1) The eternal distinction between right and

wrong. "There is," says Renan, "one indubitable foundation, which scepticism shall not shake, where man may find, until the end of time, a foothold firm amid the uncertainties around him: Good is good, evil is evil." Cf. F. W. Robertson's *Life and Letters*, i., pp. 103–4. Begin here. Consider that word of Jesus: "If any man willeth to do God's will, he shall know of (rather 'come to know about') My teaching" (St. John vii. 17). "God's will" is simply the duty which lies to one's hand. And duty conducts to faith.

> "The toppling crags of Duty scaled
> Are close upon the shining table-lands,
> To which our God Himself is moon and sun."

Jesus, you see, does not present us with a complete creed, commanding our acceptance of it. He says to us, like Rembrandt to his pupil: "Try to put well in practice what you already know; and in doing so you will, in good time, discover the hidden things which you now inquire about."

(2) Your own heart's love. Use it as a life's interpreter. I share your horror at the world's load of suffering, especially "the cry of the children," but it does not shake my faith in God's goodness. For it is inflicted not by the will of God, but in its despite by the sin of man; and the thought of it commends to me the Gospel's testimony that God is at war with sin, and will never rest till He has driven it from the earth. I find the Fatherhood of God a more reasonable creed than the Orphanhood of Humanity. The compassion of my own poor, selfish heart is only a drop from the Ocean of Love in the Heart of God.

(3) The ultimate assurance of faith is Jesus. He is the supreme miracle, and a vision of Him is the death

of doubt. Get to know Him, and your soul will find rest. I remember, and I shall never forget, the day when I made the glad discovery and the wonder of it broke upon me. Have you ever imagined how it would affect you if you had never heard of Christianity and, chancing upon the four Gospels, read them with an open mind? Try to escape from the confusion of dogmas and theories, and get face to face with Jesus, and see if faith be not inevitable.

My quotation to-day is from Renan: "There are, in reality, but few people who have a right not to believe in Christianity."

XLIII.—THE PARTING OF THE WAYS

Tuscan.—"How, for instance, is unemployment and all it entails the sin of man, unless Man (with a capital) be said to sin by evolving his economic consciousness? Where does individual providence appear in these cases? For generations the bitterness and spiritual taint must persist from these times of strain and stress. The poor children of victims will only with the greatest difficulty be persuaded that 'God is Love.' However marvellously a Plan appears in the education of the Race, it is pursued remorselessly at the vicarious (and not voluntary) agony of individual lives. Indeed, I wonder why and how we are ever even temporarily happy, conscious as we are, in growing degree and numbers, of the tragic undertone of life."

Precisely so. Now see where you are. You are at the cross-roads, and which way are you going to take? You have quitted the fool's paradise of blind and selfish optimism and opened your eyes to the tragedy of human life. And what attitude are you going to assume toward it?

There are two ways which you must choose between. There is the obvious and easy way of atheistic materialism. There can be no God with a heart of love and a hand of power, or these things would not

be. This may seem the obvious inference, but it is an attitude of despair. It would be terrible if there were no eternal goodness behind the sorrow and suffering of humanity, thinking of us and planning for us and working out its own beneficent purposes amid all the *Sturm und Drang*.

> "How can they live, how will they die,
> How bear the cross of grief,
> Who have not got the light of faith,
> The courage of belief?"

It seems to me that, on the atheistic theory, the best, the only reasonable resource for the vast majority of mankind is suicide. Their life is a horrid nightmare, and the sooner it is ended the better. This is the inference which men drew and acted upon in the dark days of decadent heathenism; and Epictetus, in his Stoic fashion, restrained them, not by assuring them of the underlying goodness of God, but by rallying their courage and bidding them "dree their weird." "Men, wait for God. When He gives the signal and releases you from this service, then you will depart to Him; but for the present endure to inhabit this country in which He set you. A short time is this of your habitation here, and easy for them that are thus disposed. Continue; do not unreasonably depart." This, you perceive, was the one restraint—the authority of God, the Commander who has stationed us like soldiers at our posts. Without God there was no restraint.

The other way is that of Faith. It is the more difficult way, demanding continual courage. "Every common day," says George MacDonald, "he who would be a live child of the living has to fight the God-denying look of things, to believe that, in spite

of their look, they are God's, and God is in them, and working His saving will in them." It is no argument against it that it is difficult, for, according to the Greek proverb, "all noble things are difficult." And it is the only reasonable way. It makes life not merely endurable, but splendidly worth while. The New Testament is the most reasonable book in the world. It takes account of the facts. It not only recognises sin, but reveals its enormity by showing what a remedy is demanded. This is the secret of its triumphant hope in face of the dire tragedy, that above the sin of man there is the mighty Love of God, and it has stooped to the rescue.

The difficulty lies, as you say, in the suffering of the innocent because they find themselves in a dislocated social order; but this is the inevitable consequence of the solidarity of humanity, and it is only one, and that the darker, side of the case. If it be true that the innocent are the worse for the sins of the guilty, it is no less true that the guilty are the better for the goodness of the innocent. The Sacrifice of Christ is just the supreme example of that vicarious law which operates continually in human life. History is nothing else than the long struggle between goodness and evil, the imputed blessing and the imputed curse. At the long last the stronger force must prevail, and the stronger force is goodness. Love is the ultimate reality, and its arbitrament will determine the destiny of every soul.

For me the supreme evidence of the Divinity of our Lord is His attitude to the abiding mysteries. He never offered a demonstration, for there is no possible demonstration of the things which lie beyond the compass of experience. He took His stand among

the weary and bewildered children of men, and said: "I have come from that realm about which you are wondering and guessing. I know what lies behind the Veil, and I tell you there is nothing there but good. There is a Father's Heart and a Father's House."

My quotation to-day is from Jeremy Taylor: "It is impossible that any man should be an atheist if he have any conscience; and for this reason it is there have been so few atheists in the world, because it is so hard for men to lose their conscience wholly."

XLIV.—FAITH AND KNOWLEDGE

J. C.—"I am a Wesleyan lay preacher, and feel exercised in mind with the diversity of opinion among theologians and ministers of the Gospel, even of the same communion, concerning such subjects as the Person of Christ, the Resurrection, the Inspiration of the Scriptures, the results of the Higher Criticism. I hold to my own opinions, of course, but a feeling of uncertainty creeps over me at times, and dims my faith in many things of which I once felt absolutely sure. Can you give me any helpful advice?"

There are two considerations which, I am sure, you will find helpful and reassuring.

1. Christianity, just because it is a divine revelation, is so infinitely great and wonderful that its fulness cannot be comprehended by any human intellect, or expressed by any human formula. A doctrine is a statement of Christian experience, and since there is always more in Christ than we have ever experienced, our doctrines can never be adequate or final. Theology is to God's revelation in Grace as Science is to His revelation in Nature; and just as Science is always discovering more of the wonders of the First Creation, so Theology is always entering more deeply into the glory of the New Creation, and appropriating more of the treasures which are hidden in Christ.

It is an instructive fact that even the inspired Apostles did not comprehend all His fulness. Each saw only so much as was revealed to him, and declared only so much as he saw. Each approached the infinite wonder along the lines of his temperament and experience. St. John saw in it a revelation of Eternal Life; St. Paul the Reconciliation of sinners to God, the satisfaction of humanity's long desire and the completion of its long discipline under the Law; the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews saw in it the rending of the Veil and the opening of free Access to God. Each saw something; and what each saw was great and abidingly true, but it was not all. "We know in part," said St. Paul, "and we prophesy in part."

It follows that there is room for doctrinal diversities within the Household of Faith. It is no marvel, nay, it is inevitable, that there should be differences of interpretation. The necessity is that, while we rejoice in the truth which has been revealed to us, we should recognise that it is but partial, and consider that our brethren also are taught by the one Spirit, and do well to rejoice in the truth which has been revealed to them. The common faith is enriched by mutual respect and comparison of the various gifts.

2. The test of discipleship is not doctrinal orthodoxy. A man may learn the time of day from his watch though he does not understand its mechanism; and he may enjoy good health though ignorant of the laws of hygiene. And neither is a man a Christian because he has a correct creed, nor need he be the less a Christian by reason of doctrinal aberrations. I have my own theology and my own idea of Church government; but, as I go about among the various denominations, I find faith and love everywhere, and I dare

not disown men who own my Lord and are owned of Him, albeit their doctrinal definitions and their practical methods are different from mine. It is a significant fact that, though the creeds of Christendom are very diverse, there is no diversity in its prayer and its praise; and the explanation is that, however we may differ in our theories about Him, we are one in love for Him, and whenever we approach Him in faith and desire, we meet at a common centre.

And this is the one and sufficient test of discipleship—love for Jesus. It is told of an old Scottish minister that a poor woman, somewhat simple-minded, applied to him once for admission to the membership of the Church. She had applied before, but he had found her so unversed in doctrinal knowledge that he had put her off until she should learn more. And now she returned, but he found her as ignorant as ever. He sent her away again, bidding her study the Shorter Catechism; but as she retired, the look of her face smote his heart. "Janet," he said, "tell me this: do you love the Lord Jesus?" Her face brightened. "Ay," she said, "I can answer that. I ken I'm very ignorant, but I do love Him; and whenever I hear His blessed name, my heart warms to Him and turns to Him like the lint-bell to the sun." This is the test. Our doctrines are at the best nothing but feeble attempts to express the inexpressible, and they will appear very insufficient in the light of Eternity. It will matter very little then what creed we have professed, but it will matter infinitely how much of the love of Jesus has got into our hearts.

My quotation to-day is from Pascal: "There is a vast distance between the knowledge of God and the love of God."

XLV.—NATURE AND THE CURSE

W. P.—"Was God aware before He created this earth of all the fearful things that would happen? Did He endow the cat or the tiger with the nature they possess—with such fiendish appliances for torturing other creatures? Look how a cat will torture a mouse or a bird before it will kill them outright—something frightful! I am sure this kind of thing stops a great number of people from believing in a God of love, and makes them atheists."

According to the teaching of the Scriptures all this horror is the consequence of sin, and, in Pascal's phrase, "testifies of a lost God." All nature, animate and inanimate, shares man's curse (cf. Gen. ii. 17, 18), and is groaning and travailing in pain together with him, and crying with him for deliverance (Rom. viii. 19–23).

This, however, is very far from being a solution of the problem. For (1) fossil remains prove that long ere the appearance upon it of the present race of man this earth was the abode of ravenous and destructive monsters, more terrible than any now existent. And (2) cruelty is not limited to the sphere of human influence. It rages where human sin has never reached. Read, *e. g.*, that awful chapter, "The Silent Warfare of the Submarine World," in Mr. Frank

Bullen's *Idylls of the Sea,* and you will realise what horrors are continually being enacted in a domain shut off from sin's contagion. "In those soundless abysses of shade beneath the waves a war is being incessantly waged which knows no truce: ruthless, unending, and universal. . . . The dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty, but they are peaceful compared with the sombre depths of the sea."

The problem is even more terrible than your statement of it makes out. And what must be said of it? Here are some considerations which seem to me helpful toward a solution:

1. Human history reaches back but a very short distance. Our planet is incalculably older than our race, and there is no telling what earlier races may have inhabited it, or what previous and more terrible tragedies may have been enacted upon it. And, as each generation is the heir of the last, why should not each race have been the heir of its predecessor? Perhaps God created our race to be His fellow-workers in the redemption of the world, bearing vicariously the curse which rested on it. I mention this not as a theory, but as a suggestion of possibilities which lie beyond our ken and should refrain us from rash dogmatism.

2. Is it true that God endowed savage animals with those "fiendish appliances for torturing other creatures"? According to the evolutionary doctrine, organic peculiarities are developments induced by the pressure of environment. "In the human species, forasmuch as there are hands to convey the food to the mouth, the mouth is flat, and by reason of its flatness, fitted only for *reception;* whereas the project-

ing jaws, the wide rictus, the pointed teeth of the dog and his affinities, enable them to apply their mouths to *snatch and seize* the objects of their pursuit." If man were bereft of hands and had to grasp his food with his mouth, he would in the course of a few generations develop a prehensile snout. The tiger's fangs and claws are not original, but acquired. They are not endowments of the Creator, but evolutions of its own savagery.

3. The origin of suffering is hidden from us, and we can only speculate about it, but that it is contrary to the will and purpose of God is evident from this, that, wherever His love is welcomed and His law obeyed, suffering is alleviated and cruelty is banished. Sir Walter Scott understood animals by loving observation of their ways, and you remember his description of the happy condition of the wild creatures on the estate of the Quaker, Joshua Geddes: "The hen partridge scarce abandoned the roost at the foot of the hedge where she had assembled her covey, though the path went close beside her; and the hare, remaining on her form, gazed at us as we passed, with her full dark eye, or, rising lazily and hopping to a little distance, stood erect to look at us with more curiosity than apprehension."

And this is no romantic imagination, as every lover of our dear dumb fellow-creatures knows. It is because their masters are stupid or brutal that animals are savage. Jack London's story of the wolf, "White Fang," shows what love can do, and how, when it gets its blessed way, it will redeem the whole creation now groaning and travailing in pain. The first time I took my dog through the wood after my settlement in the country, he pounced upon a rabbit and

strangled it; and when he saw that I was vexed, he looked at me with liquid penitence in his soft brown eyes, and ever after the rabbits would frisk past his nose and he never harmed them. It is said that dogs and cats are "natural enemies," but in a home where they are understood and loved, they become the staunchest of comrades. When God's will is done on earth as it is in Heaven, love will prevail, and there will not be a savage creature in the world. "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain."

My quotation to-day is from Bacon: "Take an Example of a Dog; And mark what a Generosity, and Courage he will put on, when he findes himselfe maintained, by a Man; who to him is instead of a *God*, or *Melior Natura*."

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

XLVI.—THE OBJECTIVE EFFICACY OF PRAYER

F. W.—"Does prayer ever change God, or is its sole function to change us, so that we can receive what God is always giving? Does it initiate in God any action which He otherwise would not have begun? We are taught to pray that only His will be done; but, God being what He is, would not that will be done just the same whether I pray or not?"

Surely, if there be a change in us, there must be a corresponding change in God, not indeed in His character and will, but in His attitude toward us and His dealings with us. There are two kinds of prayer, and if you consider, you will see how each of these alters our relation to God, and therewith His relation to us, and consequently His course of action.

(1) Prayer of Penitence. Obviously this produces a change in God. It turns away His wrath and averts His judgment. You remember how the prophet announced the destruction of Nineveh; and the blow would have fallen had the citizens remained obdurate; but they laid his warning to heart and repented. That put them in a new relation toward God, and He adopted a new attitude toward them. "God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that He had said that He would do unto them; and He did it not" (Jonah iii. 10).

(2) Prayer of Intercession. What does it mean when you pray for a fellow-creature? It does not mean simply that you express your solicitude for him, and roll the responsibility upon God, and cast upon God the office of befriending him, but that you take the office upon yourself and ask God to co-operate with you, and pledge yourself to co-operate with God in succouring and saving him. Straightway a new instrument is in God's hand, and His action is thus far modified.

And, be it observed, one reason why our prayers so often go unanswered, is that we cast the responsibility on God, and forget that we have our part to perform. I have heard an amusing yet instructive anecdote of a little girl who was greatly distressed by her brother's indulgence in the cruel sport of bird-trapping. One night, when she was repeating her prayers at her mother's knee, she added a petition of her own: "And, dear Lord Jesus, please don't let Johnnie catch the poor little birds to-morrow morning; and I'm sure you won't. Amen." "Mary," said her mother as she tucked her into her crib, "why were you so sure that Jesus would hear your prayer and not let Johnnie catch the birds?" "Oh, you see, mother, after supper I went down the garden and smashed the trap." The lesson is that we must not only pray, but co-operate with God, and do our part in bringing about the desired issue. If our prayers are to change Him, they must first change us.

And, moreover, it should be understood that prayer is not dictation to God, but submission to His will. When we put ourselves at His disposal, He will certainly use us; but it may be in quite another way than we desire and expect; for it may very well be that the

way we have in view is a wrong way and would lead to disaster. There are many interests to be considered besides ours. Æsop was only a Pagan, yet he taught many truths in his homely fashion which Christians may profitably lay to heart. Here is one of his Fables: "A certain man had two daughters, and he married one to a gardener and the other to a potter. After a while he went to the gardener's wife and asked her how she was, and how they were thriving. She said they had everything, but there was one thing that they were praying for—rain to refresh the plants. By and by he visited the potter's wife, and asked her likewise how she was; and she said they had everything else that they needed, and there was only one thing that they were praying for—a continuance of fair weather and sunshine to dry the clay. 'If,' said he, 'you are seeking for fair weather and your sister for rain, which of you am I to join with in prayer?'"

Here is the chief source of our faithlessness and our discontent: we forget that we do not stand alone, but are citizens of the commonwealth of humanity, and the general welfare is rather to be considered than individual interests. Richard Baxter spoke a wise word once in remonstrating with ministers who were dissatisfied with the poverty and hardness of their charges. "The work must be done by some one: why not by you?" We should learn to "think imperially," and recognise the limitations and acquiesce in the restraints which the Providential Order of the Universe imposes on our individualistic aspirations and ambitions. It is the very essence of Christianity to think not of self but of the Kingdom of God. And in the long run altruism means self-enlargement and individualism self-impoverishment. For, as Marcus

Aurelius says, "What is not profitable for the swarm neither is it profitable for the bee." This is just our Lord's saying: "He that findeth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for My sake shall find it."

My quotation to-day is from St. Augustine: "The whole life of a good Christian is a holy desire."

XLVII.—THE APPOINTED TASK

Business.—"A friend and I was talking last week of our duty as Christians to the business. My friend and I (both Local Preachers) are both departmental managers in a large business, our spare time is almost entirely given up to various church work. Preaching on Sundays and sometimes in the week. Leaders of Society Class and addressing other meetings. We enjoy this work very much and to be shut off from this work after tasting its joys would mean for both of us an impoverished life. On the other hand there is our business. We are getting older, over thirty years of age. Competition is keen and our employers recognise the man who serves them best, quite irrespective of Christian character. Now we can compete if we give our whole minds to business. But to do the best requires concentration. We have others depending on us, and to be outstripped takes the enthusiasm from life and even lessens the opportunity for service in the church. Do you think it our duty to slacken our Christian work and become just ordinary Church followers and give our attention to business?"

Ah, that stupid phrase "Christian Work" and its mischievous implicate! Are we never to escape from the monastic idea that the world is a godless domain, and its employments irreligious?

This is not the Scriptural conception. Think of

that beautiful passage (Exod. xxxi. 1–5) where it is written that, when the Tabernacle was a-building, the Lord "called Bezaleel, and filled him with the Spirit of God." For what end? That he might prophesy or minister at the Altar? No; "to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of timber, to work in all manner of workmanship." Bezaleel was a craftsman; his craft was his calling of God, and his skill was the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. And think of our Blessed Lord. His ministry of teaching and healing lasted only three short years, and for eighteen years He was a carpenter at Nazareth. But all the while He was glorifying God, and doing the Father's Will, and working the work of Him that sent Him, no less while handling hammer and saw than while laying His hands on sick folk and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom. He knew that He had come to redeem the world, and that the time was short, yet He never fretted at the seeming futility of those obscure years. He accepted what each day brought as God's appointment, and waited patiently until His call came. Old Stradivari of Cremona had the true idea of "Christian Work" when he recognised his violin-making as his calling of God, and put his heart into it.

> "If my hand slacked,
> I should rob God—since He is fullest good—
> Leaving a blank instead of violins.
> . . . 'Tis God gives skill,
> But not without men's hands: He could not make
> Antonio Stradivari's violins
> Without Antonio."

The honest employment by which a man earns his bread is the work which God has given him to do; and if you do yours in the Spirit of Christ, it will be

"Christian Work." Whatever lessens your efficiency is a temptation of the Devil, even if it be preaching. This is not simply a religious principle: it is, as you are finding out, a dire necessity. Modern life is so strenuous, competition so keen, that there is no chance for a man unless he gives himself to his work. Your employers are justified in demanding your best, and if you withhold it you must take the consequences, and your family will suffer. Beware, let me repeat, of what Thomas à Kempis calls "dispersion of heart." We all have to limit ourselves. I love preaching, but the work of my class-room and study is very exacting, and I dare not accept a tithe of the invitations which pour in upon me from all the three Kingdoms. You must do the like.

And there is another side to the question. Preaching is a high and difficult office; and it is no less true of it than of any other employment that it demands patient discipline and undivided devotion. In these days of intellectual unrest and general enlightenment a Christian teacher needs more than piety and earnestness. I know that you have these, but—forgive me for speaking frankly—the composition of your letter shows that you lack the mental equipment which the pulpit demands. Glorify God in your appointed station, and avail yourself of the aid and inspiration which the ordinances of His House afford. Be a good member of the Church, and discharge the offices which she requires of her sons, and which are no obstacle to the business of life. Leave preaching for those who have been set apart and trained for it. God wants preachers and ploughmen both; and He requires of His preachers good sermons, and of His ploughmen clean, straight furrows.

My quotation to-day is from Marcus Aurelius: "The craft which thou hast learned, love; therein find thy refreshment; and pass through the rest of thy life as having entrusted to the gods all thine own affairs with thy whole soul, and making thyself neither a tyrant nor a slave to any man."

XLVIII.—WRONGED AND WRONG-DOER

Anon.—"How far may one be justified in avoiding a person or persons who by act and word have tried to ruin one's future? Having so far gained their point, they wish to renew the outer show of friendship. Personally, I feel it hypocrisy to receive them."

Being unacquainted with the circumstances, I can deal only with general principles. In a case where injury has been deliberately attempted, it is pure impudence in the perpetrators to turn round and profess friendship as though nothing had happened. If they be truly penitent, they are bound to confess their fault and seek forgiveness. Otherwise you have no guarantee that their disposition is changed, and that they will not repeat the wrong. Until they confess their fault and seek forgiveness, treat them, when you encounter them, with the courtesy which you owe to yourself, but enter into no relations with them, and beware of putting yourself in their power. And the law of confession is that it must be as open as the offence. If a man has publicly traduced you, it is not enough that he should tender you a private apology.

The moment an adequate confession is made, you should accept it heartily; but the tragedy of a rupture between friends is that it is hardly ever possible to

restore the old relationship. Shakespeare's Archbishop of York says:

> "Our peace will, like a broken limb united,
> Grow stronger for the breaking."

And so thought St. Francis of Sales. He disapproved of the saying, "Never rely on a reconciled enemy." "Experience," he said, "shows that the callosity formed round a broken bone makes it stronger than before." I doubt it. "I'll trust, by leisure," says Shakespeare's Saturninus, "him that mocks me once." And so thought Santa Teresa: "When a breach once takes place between two intimate friends, it is never entirely forgotten. They are never again such trustful friends as they were before." God alone can forgive *and forget*. We may forgive, but we cannot forget; we cannot conquer the misgiving that the man who has once proved false, may do the like again. A friend's disloyalty means the death of the friendship; for, in George Eliot's phrase, it "tears down the invisible altar of trust." It were well for us if we considered this more. A quarrel in a home is fatal. There may be a reconciliation, but the sweet serenity, the sense of security, never returns. The storm passes, but the sun shines no more.

There are two counsels which I would give you.

(1) Consider dispassionately whether there may not be some fault on your own side. Possibly there is none. I have had little personal experience of this painful sort. The world has been very kind to me, and I owe to God and man a heavier debt of gratitude than I can ever pay. Still, I cannot deny that surprising and distressing things do happen—venomous outbursts which seem hardly explicable save on the

theory of demoniacal possession, and which remind one of the Greek philosopher's saying that everybody is mad at some point, and almost persuade one that not only individuals but communities are liable to fits of frenzy. It does occasionally happen, especially where jealousy or self-interest comes into play, that malignity is undeserved; but generally the victim has, perhaps unwittingly, given some provocation, and if he be sensible, he will consider where he may be to blame. Possibly it might never have happened had he been more prudent. "It is not martyrdom," says George Eliot, "to pay bills that one has run into one's self."

(2) When you sustain a wrong, accept it quietly with the dignity which is born of self-respect; bear it gently, and commit your case to God. This—to put it on the lowest ground—is the best policy. "Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, saith the Lord"; and St. Paul's counsel is: "Avenge not yourselves, beloved, but give place unto the wrath of God," *i. e.* stand aside and let God take the matter in hand. His vindication is complete and overwhelming, and it is commonly very swift. There is something positively "uncanny" about the way in which the wheel turns round; and there is a temptation to unholy triumph when one sees one's enemies put to shame and derision, and their machinations made to serve one's advancement. "As for you, ye meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, to bring it to pass, as it is this day."

Whatever happens, keep your heart sweet and clean and gentle; and be sure that nothing from without can hurt you unless you let it in. This is the truth of the mediæval superstition that a demon could not

enter a house uninvited. Go through life gently and inoffensively. Be kind, and remember kindnesses. Take no notice of the stupid and unpleasant things, and, as we say in Ireland, "remember to forget them."

My quotation to-day is from Swift: "If the men of wit and genius would resolve never to complain in their works of critics and detractors, the next age would not know that they ever had any."

XLIX.—JEALOUSY

Sincerity.—"Do you consider that jealousy is the most baneful influence in this world and hinders the progress of Christ's Kingdom more than anything else in this life?"

I should not wonder. It is certainly a cruel and wicked thing, a fountain of bitterness and sorrow. "It is," says Bacon, "the vilest Affection, and the most depraved; For which cause, it is the proper Attribute, of the Devil, who is called; *The Envious Man, that soweth tares amongst the wheat by night.* As it alwayes commeth to passe, that *Envy* worketh subtilly, and in the darke; And to the prejudice of good things, such as is the *Wheat*." You seem to have suffered from it, and a little discussion of it may be helpful to you and others who have written to me in the same strain. It is hardly an inviting theme, but it is not always possible to obey Jeremy Taylor's injunction to "contemplate beatifying objects."

(1) Jealousy is really a tribute—a tribute which failure pays to success and mediocrity to eminence. "When a true genius appears in the world," says Swift, "you may know him by this sign, that the dunces are all in confederacy against him." "A man, that hath no vertue in himselfe," says Bacon again, "ever envieth Vertue in others. For Mens Mindes,

will either feed upon their owne Good, or upon others Evill; And who wanteth the one, will prey upon the other; And who so is out of Hope to attaine to anothers Vertue, will seeke to come at even hand, by Depressing an others Fortune." It is the way of human nature. It is not easy to be eclipsed with a good grace. When a man elevates himself above his fellows, it is difficult for them to recognise his merit and rejoice whole-heartedly in his achievement. They see in his exaltation a slight upon themselves. A man's success tests his neighbours. It will make him a multitude of friends, but it will also make him a coterie of malignant enemies. "You are a' speakin'," said a worthy old woman on hearing of Guthrie's popularity after his settlement at Arbirlot, "of the fine young man you have just gotten for a minister; but if he is faithful to his Master, be sure he'll have a' the blackguards of the parish on his tap in three weeks!" "This," said Guthrie, "did happen afterwards, indeed; for some two or three of the greatest blackguards in the parish did their utmost—though they failed—to blast my happiness and usefulness."

(2) The mischief of jealousy is that it almost inevitably vents itself in detraction and slander. It is a cruel and unscrupulous passion, and prompts to the crime which the Latin satirist calls "slitting windpipes with the fine edge of slander." Probably no one has ever struggled out of the rut without getting bruised and bespattered. It is a painful and discouraging experience, but the perpetrators are the chief and, in the long run, the only sufferers. I have heard of a viper in India which bites so savagely that its fangs break, and the poison enters its own wounds and kills it. A good man may suffer for a time, but, if he

bears himself humbly and inoffensively, "continuing patiently in well-doing," he emerges victorious, with tenfold lustre. The world may be deceived for a season, but not always. Its ultimate verdict is just. *Securus judicat orbis terrarum.*

(3) It is the part of a wise man, when he is slandered, not to cry out against the injustice, still less to retaliate, but to scrutinise his own life and see if there may not be something in it which has given occasion, unwittingly and unintentionally. *Fas est et ab hoste doceri.* It is useful to "see ourselves as others see us," even in caricature.

(4) The disposition to jealousy is inherent in human nature, and we should sedulously guard against it and mercilessly repress it. We should school ourselves to generous judgment, and shun the habit of criticism. How many things we say even about our friends behind their backs which we would not say to their faces! "I hold it as a fact," says Pascal, "that if all men knew what each said of the other, there would not be four friends in the world. This is evident from the quarrels which arise from time to time through indiscreet revelations." It is a defect in chivalry, and it may easily pass into worse. That is a safe rule of St. Bonaventura: "Be ashamed to say of a man in his absence what could not be said in his presence without giving a wound to charity. Let every man feel that with you he is at all times in security." When an unkind speech rises to one's lips, it is a salutary discipline to force it back and cast about for something kind to say instead.

(5) Let us beware of over-sensitiveness, which is just a form of vanity. "There are some," says Pierre Nicole, "who are sore everywhere." The withholding

of praise, even when it is deserved, need not imply jealousy. It may, on the contrary, evince respect. "You would compliment a coxcomb," says Emerson, "for doing a good act, but you would not praise an angel. The silence that accepts merit as the most natural thing in the world, is the highest applause."

My quotation to-day is from St. Francis of Sales: "He who is over-timid of criticism is like a man who fears to travel in the summer because of the flies."

L.—CRANKS

Adam Bede (*Newfoundland*).—"Do you know any general principle which ought to be observed in dealing with 'cranks,' *e. g.* old men neither able to read nor write, who have given trouble to ministers for years past, and who stay away from public worship for lengthy periods, meanwhile nursing their supposed grievances?"

Never attempt to deal with them at all. Let them "gang their ain gait," and never take the slightest notice of their eccentricities. Be friendly and kindly when you encounter them; but never go out of your way to show them attention in the vain hope of winning them; and never remark on their absence from church. And never argue with them; it is useless. Just listen to them good-humouredly, and then talk about something else. It is related of Diogenes the Cynic that once, to demonstrate his contempt for creature comforts, he stood out in the pouring rain to the admiration of the passers-by, until Plato came along and told them that, if they took no notice of him, he would soon go home and make himself comfortable. So just take no notice, and they will find it is no use and give it up. And even if they should treat you rudely, never mind. There is a delicious anecdote of Socrates that once a fellow kicked him,

and he paid no heed, and when a bystander wondered at his taking it so quietly, he said: "If an ass had kicked me, would I have brought an action against it?" When you have to do with vulgar and stupid people, always treat them with the courtesy which you owe to yourself.

All this is somewhat cynical counsel, but there is much more than this to be considered. I confess to a certain sympathy with cranks. They are no doubt very unpleasant, and, if you let them, they can be very troublesome; but there is generally a reason for their being what they are, and, depend upon it, if you knew the reason, you would look upon your troubler with other eyes. You would recognise that he is in sore need of sympathy and compassion. That is a true saying of Madame de Staël: *Comprendre c'est pardonner* ("To understand is to pardon"). Just get to know the man; see the road which he has travelled; and you will find some experience which has warped his mind and embittered his spirit. "Many an irritating fault," says George Eliot, "many an unlovely oddity, has come of a hard sorrow, which has crushed and maimed the nature just when it was expanding into plenteous beauty; and the trivial erring life which we visit with our harsh blame, may be but as the unsteady motion of a man whose best limb is withered." Ay, and there may be still worse behind all. "It often happens," says Lecky, in his wise, wholesome book, *The Map of Life*, "that we have been long blaming a man for manifest faults of character till at last suicide, or the disclosure of some grave bodily or mental disease, which has long been working unperceived, explains his faults and turns our blame into pity." More and more do I see that

in this dark world of ours, where each is a veiled mystery to his fellows, there is no place for blame and condemnation; rather is there need of patience and forbearance and pity and gentleness. Believe me, there is not a hard word that you have ever spoken which you would not bitterly regret if you knew all. It was like striking a wounded animal. Never strike until you see what you are striking; and when you see, you will not strike; you will pity and soothe. Be patient, be kind, be gentle.

You are a minister of the Gospel, and I might sum up all that I have said and all that I should say in a single counsel, which I often give to my students: Be always, in the pulpit and out of it, a gentleman, a Christian gentleman—that rare and beautiful personage whom no one has ever succeeded in defining, but whom we all recognise when we meet him. Perhaps the nearest approach to a definition is that exquisite passage in Newman's *Idea of a University*, where this occurs: "The true gentleman carefully avoids whatever may cause a jar or a jolt in the minds of those with whom he is cast; all clashing of opinion, or collision of feeling, all restraint, or suspicion, or gloom, or resentment; his great concern being to make every one at their ease and at home. He has eyes on all his company; he is tender towards the bashful, gentle towards the distant, and merciful towards the absurd. He is never mean or little in his disputes, never takes unfair advantage, never mistakes personalities or sharp sayings for arguments, or insinuates evil which he dare not speak out." A gentleman always puts people on their best behaviour, and, though he never "stands on his dignity," no one would venture to use liberties with him. And this is

one solid reason why a minister should be a gentleman: his person is then sacrosanct—even with cranks.

My quotation to-day is from St. Francis of Sales: "The most powerful remedy against sudden starts of impatience is a sweet and amiable silence."

LI.—ANONYMOUS LETTERS

"May I trouble you," writes a correspondent, "for your attitude toward anonymous letters addressed to ministers?"

This is a question which has frequently been addressed to me, and I have always hitherto shrunk from dealing with it, for the thing is so squalid. But I have been asked about it so often of late that I must conquer my reluctance; and, though reason is thrown away upon the culprits, perhaps what I say may prove serviceable to the victims of this base annoyance, and help them to endure it with equanimity, and even to use it as a means of grace.

I must say that I have been singularly immune from this plague. I have received a great many anonymous letters, but they have been mostly of a pleasant sort. There reach me almost daily grateful acknowledgments from people who have profited by something which I have said or written, and who conceal their names and addresses lest I should have the trouble of answering—a delicate consideration which, overburdened as I am, I gratefully appreciate. And I welcome this opportunity of conveying my thanks to these anonymous correspondents.

This, however, is not the sort of thing that is now in question, and I know something of the affliction.

What minister, what author does not? The experience is interesting. It affords material for the investigation of the morbid secretions of human nature. Those precious manuscripts are usually mere outpourings of stupid ignorance, ill-spelled and ungrammatical; but there is another sort which are more offensive—the pious sort which, with a loathsome assumption of sanctified superiority, pour out a flood of turgid and nauseous maliciousness, and, with that lack of humour which is at once a symptom and a cause, conclude, "A Humble Christian," "A Simple Believer," "A Lover of Christ," "One of His Little Ones," etc., etc. The schools of extreme Evangelisticism and the Higher Life are hot-beds of these noxious pests.

The question is what one should do with an anonymous letter; and my answer is: Destroy it, and *forget all about it*—unless, indeed, one is conscious that there is some truth in its criticism; and in this case one should learn the lesson, for *fas est et ab hoste doceri*. On no account should one let the thing rankle in one's mind and poison one's heart. Whatever happens, keep your heart sweet and clean and gentle.

My reasons for this attitude are these:

1. If you let the thing stay in your mind, it will breed suspicion. You will wonder who wrote it, and you will incriminate a score of innocent persons. This is the worst criminality of anonymous letter-writing, that it exposes others to an odious suspicion. So put it resolutely out of your thoughts, and meet everybody with a glad heart and a kind face.

2. You could not more effectually chagrin your tormentor. If he sees that you are hurt, he will be delighted and do it again. Here is a delicious anec-

dote about Plato: During a visit to Syracuse he angered the tyrant Dionysius by his plainness of speech. Dionysius was for putting him to death, but ended by selling him as a slave. Some friends of the philosopher bought him and conveyed him home to Athens; and then the tyrant, fearing reprisals, wrote to Plato and begged him to say nothing about it. Plato replied that he was so busy that he had forgotten all about Dionysius. "Nothing," says Amiel, "is more characteristic of a man than the manner in which he behaves towards fools;" and it is a wise rule that we consult our own dignity by ignoring affronts and taking no notice of injuries. We should not even despise them: they are not worth even that.

3. If you detected the culprit, you might be sorry and wish he had remained hidden. It is astonishing how much spitefulness there is in human nature. In some minds it amounts almost to insanity, and if you achieve any success, you will find yourself traduced by men of whom you would little expect it. There are some facts which one had better not know if one would retain respect for human nature. Observe, I do not say "for Christianity," which is quite another matter. And very probably you would find that your troubler is actually insane. I once got an offensive letter, not anonymous, and, to my abiding comfort, I wrote a kindly answer to it; and some time after I got an affecting letter from the man's wife, telling me that he had been taken away to an asylum, and she had found among his papers a copy of his letter to me and my reply to it. If we knew everything, we would never be angry at anything. Our one emotion would be a great compassion. And the truth is that a "crank" is just a species of lunatic. There is a

mental twist about him, and he should be treated accordingly.

My quotation to-day is from Dr. Chalmers: "An excellent rule is, to suspect the propriety of every communication where the personal feelings or circumstances of the speaker form part of the subject."

LII.—IMMORTALITY

S. W. (*S.A.*).—"Eighteen months ago I lost my wife—the finest intellect I ever came into touch with. Her faith in her God and in the life to come was unshakeable, and she kept my proof-wanting, mathematical brain from wavering. She died on 6th June, 1909, and almost immediately I seemed to feel a blank. I felt, and have never lost the feeling since, that the mind which had been my companion so long, no longer existed. I recognise that my brain, trained to grapple with the tangible and provable, has not been educated to face psychical problems. I am not a stupid and stubborn sceptic. I wish from my heart to recover my faith."

My training and aptitude are both widely different from yours, and for this very reason it may perhaps be helpful to you if I show you how the question has presented itself to me, and why I believe with a glad and growing assurance in a life beyond.

1. It clears the ground to recognise that there is no proper demonstration—mathematical, scientific, or metaphysical—of immortality. And this, so far from foreclosing the question, only lifts it to a higher category. There is really very little that admits of demonstration. You can prove that the three angles

of a triangle = two right angles; and that 2 + 2 = 4 —though J. S. Mill, you remember, allowed the conceivability of a world where "two and two would make five." This is about the limit of demonstrability. You can prove none of the fundamental truths upon which we act continually, and without which life could not go on. You cannot prove the existence of God: no, and neither can you prove the existence of an objective world—witness Protagoras and Bishop Berkeley. "If," says Dr. Percy Gardner, "there ever lived a man who supposed himself to be the only conscious being in existence, he could probably never be confuted." You cannot even prove your own existence. Will the Cartesian *Cogito, ergo sum* do it? The *cogitare* proves the *esse*, but what proves the *cogitare?* The fact is that nothing which really requires demonstration admits of it.

2. Demonstration is possible only in dealing with well-defined subjects which may be employed as experimental materials or syllogistic terms; and it is therefore only what should *a priori* be expected that there is no scientific proof of a life beyond. But then, on the other hand, science has not disproved it. "In my most extreme fluctuations," wrote Darwin near the end of his life, "I have never been an Atheist in the sense of denying the existence of a God. I think that generally (and more and more as I grow older), but not always, an Agnostic would be the more correct description of my state of mind." Science leaves the question open; and, as my colleague Dr. Leebody has written, "if the doctrine of immortality cannot be proved by science, I think it may be fairly said that the results of modern scientific research, fairly viewed, are favourable to its reception." So Darwin thought:

"Believing as I do that man in the distant future will be a far more perfect creature than he now is, it is an intolerable thought that he and all other sentient beings are doomed to complete annihilation after such long-continued slow progress. To those who fully admit the immortality of the human soul, the destruction of our world will not appear so dreadful."

3. Thus, then, the court is open for the pleadings of the heart. And its instincts are real phenomena, and must be taken into account in forming a just theory of the Universe. And they speak with no uncertain voice, alike in the age-long faith of humanity and in their rebellion against the cruelty of life apart from immortality. "Unless," says E. S. Phelps, "He created this world from sheer extravagance in the infliction of purposeless pain, there must be another life to justify, to heal, to comfort, to offer happiness, to develop holiness." And so R. L. Stevenson: "We had needs invent Heaven if it had not been revealed; there are some things that fall so bitterly ill on this side Time." It seems to me that immortality is a corollary of Evolution. I have faith that the operations of the Universe will attain their end.

> "Life is probation, and this earth no goal
> But starting-point of man."

4. To me the grand evidence is Jesus. He never proved immortality. Not that it was unquestioned in His day; for there was never an age when faith was more difficult. Heathendom laughed its old myths to scorn, and Judaism was divided between dead Pharisaism and materialistic Sadduceeism. The spiritual world had receded far away, and Jesus stood amid the children of men with their weary, troubled hearts, and

proclaimed the things unseen and eternal. He proved none of them: He knew better. "Take My word for it," He said. "In My Father's House are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you." He knew what lies behind the shadows which enfold our little life, and He has told us that there is nothing there which is not good. And the ultimate question is, Can we accept the word of Jesus? Its main guarantee is that, when we trust it and rest upon it, we find peace. It proves itself reasonable and sure if only it is put to the test. Thus, the secret of faith is to keep near Jesus, catch His spirit, and learn His way of looking at life. You remember what Cicero's friend said about Plato's argument for Immortality: "When I read, I assent; but as soon as I lay down the book, all the assent is gone." Jesus is the Christian argument for Immortality and all the splendid hopes which give life value. In His presence faith lifts up her head and lives; away from Him she sinks and perishes.

My quotation to-day is from Fichte: "The surest way of acquiring a conviction of a life after death is so to act in this life that we can venture to wish for another."

MY PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

Take things gently; forget the ill and remember the good; never fret about what you cannot help or cannot understand; be patient; be kind to man and beast, for all need kindness; and make much of the sweet, tender, homely things which, after all, are the true riches.

INDEX

I

SUBJECTS AND NAMES

ABSTINENCE, 46
Adam, Dr., 111
Advocate, 17
Æsop, 201
Agnostic, 224
Ambrose, 137
Amiel, 221
Animals, redemption of, 194 f.
Anonymous letters, 219 ff.
Apologetic, 124
Apostles and learning, 180
Arians, 75
Aristotle, 4
Arnold, Sir Edwin, 133
Atheism, 185 f., 224
Atonement, 145 ff.
Augustine, 42, 76, 80, 159, 202

Bacon, 47, 70, 195, 211
Baxter, Richard, 49, 64, 93, 98, 117, 120, 201
Bellay, Bishop of, 65
Berkeley, 224
Bernard of Clairvaux, 19, 80, 112, 171
Bible, function of the, 125
„ interest in the, 102 f.
„ method of studying the, 103
„ truth of the, 123 ff.
Bonaventura, 213
Brown, Dr. John, 84
Browne, Sir Thomas, 6
Browning, E. B., 150
„ Robert, 7, 13, 175, 181
Bruce, A. B., 113
Bullen, 192
Bunyan, 96, 155, 156, 167
Burton, Robert, 114
Bushnell, 16
Business men and the Church, 23
Butler, 139

Calamy, Dr. Edmund, 104
Calvin, 128, 150
Card-playing, 106
Cassian, 58
Celebration of Eucharist, 38
Chalmers, 60, 71, 222
"Christian work," 203 ff.
Christianity and Theology, 189
Chrysostom, 104, 140
Church, 23 ff., 118
Church and State, 31 f.
Cicero, 129, 226
Clement of Alexandria, 28, 30, 159
Clerical deportment, 106 ff.
Coleridge, 134, 142
Comforter, 17

Common life, sanctity of, 203 f.
Communion, frequency of, 41 ff.
Confession, 162 f.
Confessional, 161 ff.
Consciousness, 11 f.
Conversion, 153 ff.
Cowper, 109
Cranks, 215 ff.
Creed and discipleship, 180
Cross, seen everywhere, 141 f.
Cup (sacramental), 45 ff.

Daniel's *Thesaurus*, 80
Darwin, 224
Deland, 107
Delivery of sermons, 71 ff.
Demonstration, limit of, 223 f.
Derby, Earl of, 148
Dereliction, 149 ff.
Descartes, 224
Desert, 5
Devotion (personal), 98 ff.
Devotional literature, 59
Dickens, 96
Diogenes, 215
Dionysius of Syracuse, 221
Dispensations, 18
D'Israeli, Isaac, 113
Diversity of doctrine permissible, 189 f.
Divinity of our Lord, 187 f.
Dods, 80
Doketism, 151
Drummond, Henry, 138
„ Dr. James, 131
Drunkenness, 47
Duncan, "Rabbi," 43, 80

Education, 64
Edwards, Dr. Lewis, 73
Emerson, 214
Environment and organic peculiarities, 193 f.
Epictetus, 186
Erskine of Linlathen, 3, 42
Esoteric, exoteric, 153
Eusebius, 131
Euthymius Zigabenus, 74, 115, 147
Evolution and Immortality, 225
Experience, diversity of, 158 f.

"Fencing the Table," 43
Fichte, 226
"First Day of the Week," 55
Fourth Gospel, 131 ff.
Francis of Sales, 64, 65, 86, 99, 208, 214, 218

Gardner, Dr. Percy, 224
Gentleman, 217 f.
George Eliot, 18, 146, 204, 209, 216
Gilbert of Sempringham, 39
Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, 138
God, conceiving of, 7 ff.
„ realisation of, 3 ff.
Goethe, 126
Grace, 171
Gregory of Nazianzus, 151
Guilt, sense of, 157 ff.

Haydn, 100
Head and members, 161 f.
Headship of Christ, 31 ff.
Heathen, 27 f.
Herbert, 54
Hillel, 124
Hoffmann, 9

Hofmann, 75
Holy Spirit, 16 ff.
"Honest doubt," 179
Horace, 111
Humour, 110
Hutton, R. H., 14
Hymns, catholicity of, 181

Ignatius, 100, 146
Ignorance, sins of, 165 ff.
Illustrations, 68 f.
Immoralities of Old Testament, 166
Immortality, 223 ff.
Imputation, 167
Incarnation, 151
Indexes, 94
Individual Cup, 47 f.
Infallible Church, 128
Innocent III, 162
Irenæus, 26
Itinerant preachers, 118 f.

James VI at Falkland, 31 f.
Jealousy, 211 ff.
Jeanie Deans, 88
Jesting preachers, 109 ff.
Jesus, aspect of, 7
„ the grand evidence of Immortality, 225
John and his partridge, 58
Johnson, Dr., 90, 110, 130, 174
Johnston, A. O., 68 f.
Juan de Avila, 65, 160
Justin I, 32
Justin Martyr, 18, 27 f., 45 f., 141 f., 180

Kant, 174
Kingsley, 114
Knox, 39

Latin hymn, 23
Laws of Nature, 136
Lawson, 84
Learning, 64
Lecky, 176, 216
"Lecturing," 75 ff., 103 f.
Leebody, 224
Lentulus, Epistle of, 9
Leonardo, 9, 15
Lightfoot, Dr. John, 133
London, Jack, 194
"Lost," 145
Love for Jesus the test of discipleship, 190 f.
Love's transforming power, 194 f.
Luis de Granada, 164

Macaulay, 111
„ Zachary, 176
MacDonald, George, 148, 175, 186
MacLaren, Dr. Alexander, 76
Madness universal, 209
Marcus Aurelius, 95, 201 f., 206
Martensen, 12 f., 16
Martineau, Dr. James, 136, 150
Melville, Andrew, 31
Memorising, 71 f.
"Merriment of parsons," 111
Mill, J. S., 224
Minister, ideal of a, 89
Ministry, 63 ff.
„ railers at the, 117
Moneron, 14
Montefiore, 149
Moody-Stuart, 80
Motherhood, 16 f.
Murray, Dr. Andrew, 80

"Music of the spheres," 3
Myers, Frederic, 89

Nature cursed by sin, 192 ff.
Newman, 217
Novels, 96

Oath of allegiance, 31 ff.
Order of service, 84 f.
Organists, 81
Origen, 18
Owen, Daniel, 112
„ John, 76, 104, 128, 160

Palgrave, 80
Pantheism, 12
Paraclete, 17
Parsimony, law of, 169 f.
Pascal, 191, 213
Peden, Alexander, 34
Pedro de Alcantara, 82, 101
Penn, 56, 108
Perseverance of saints, 175
Phelps, E. S., 225
Philo, 14
Philosophy and the Gospel, 153 f.
Pictures of Jesus, 9 f.
Pierre Nicole, 213
Plagiarism, 113 ff.
Plato, 127, 134, 215, 221, 226
Pliny, 95
Politics, 83
Prayer, intercessory, 200
„ objective efficacy of, 199 ff.
„ penitential, 199
„ social, not individualistic, 201
Prayers (pulpit), 79 ff.
Prayers, preparation of, 83 ff.
Preacher, quality of a, 65
Preaching, 91
„ rules for, 73 f.
Predestination, 173 ff.
Priestcraft, 163
Prodigal Son, 147, 158
Promises, the, 135 ff.
Proof-texts, 75
Prophecy, 139 ff.
Propitiation, 146
Protagoras, 224
Pythagoras, 3, 47

Qualifications for ministry, 63 ff.

Reading, 94 ff.
Reconciliation, 147
Religio Medici, 6
Rembrandt, 183
Renan, 66, 149, 173, 183, 184
Resentment, 207 ff.
Reviewing, 210
Roberts, Eleazar, 90
Robertson, F. W., 9, 95, 183
Romanes, G. J., 15, 181
Rossetti, Christina, 18
Rothe, 152
Ruskin, 132 f.
Rutherford, Samuel, 44

Sabbath, 53 ff., 57 ff.
Sabbath-observance, 57 ff.
Sacramental, 42 f.
Saint-Cyran, 105
Salvation, 15
Sanday, 131
Schmiedel, 132
Scott, 25, 78, 88, 194
"Seminal Word," 18, 28

Seneca, 95, 97, 116, 157
Sensitiveness, 213
Sermon-delivery, 71 ff.
Sermon-preparation, 67 ff.
Seventh Day Adventists, 53 ff.
Shakespeare, 114, 165, 208
Sick visitation, 87 ff.
" Silent years," 204
Sin, damage of, 170
Smith, Sidney, 111
Socrates, 134, 215 f.
Solitude, 5, 13
Song of Solomon, 140 f.
Sophocles, 129
Spaniards in America, 29
Spiritual independence, 31 ff.
Staël, Madame de, 216
Sterne, 114
Stevenson, R. L., 225
Stoic, 13
Stowe, Mrs. Beecher, 96
Stradivari, 204
Suffering and sin, 192 f.
Suicide, 186
Sunday, 53 ff., 57 ff.
Supper, 37 ff.
Swift, 210, 211

Talmud, 4, 17, 66
Taylor, Jeremy, 10, 25, 57, 125, 188, 211
Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, 84 f., 115
Tennyson, 123, 183
Terence, 106
Teresa, 158, 208
Tertullian, 181
Testimony of the Holy Spirit, 128 f.
Texts, 67 f.
Theodoric the Ostrogoth, 32
Theodosius, 137
Theology and Christianity, 134
Theophilus of Antioch, 11
Thomas à Kempis, 40, 58, 96, 114, 168, 205
Thoreau, 110
Thorwaldsen, 10
Tillietudlem Castle, 25
Titles for sermons, 69 f.
Transfiguration of sin's scars, 171
Transubstantiation, 163
Trinity, 11 ff.

Ultimate certainties, 182 ff.
Union between Christ and believers, 161 ff.
Unfermented Wine, 46 f.
Unpardonable Sin, 166
Unwritten Law, 129
Unwritten Saying, 32, 125

Vengeance, 209
" Verily, verily," 133
Vicariousness, 187
Vincent Ferrer, 125 f.
Visitation of Sick, 87 ff.
Visitation, pastoral, 90 ff., 99, 106 f.

Watts, 55
Well within, 25
Whittier, 16, 18, 146
Wine (sacramental), 46 f.
Witness for Christ, 28 f.
Wordsworth, 5

Xenophon, 134

Zeno's demonstrations, 175 f.

INDEX

II

PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE

	PAGE		PAGE
Gen. i. 2	17	Matt. xxv. 40, 45	161
ii. 17, 18	192	Mark i. 22, 27	133
xiv. 10	133	v. 19	25
l. 20	209	v. 41	133
Exod. xvii. 7, 8.	4	x. 37, xv. 27	68
xxxi. 1–5.	204	xi. 24	132
Deut. xxxi. 8	135	xiii. 11	161
Job xlii. 5–6	158	xiii. 32	132
Ps. xix.	5	Luke x. 7	90
xxii. 1.	149	x. 21, 22	132
xxii. 28	31	xii. 12	161
lxxii.	140	xiii. 32, 33	132
Song viii. 6, 7	141	xvii. 5, 6.	137
Isa. xi. 6, 9	195	xxii. 19	37
lv. 7	135	xxiii. 34	166
Jer. xxxi. 3	135	xxiv. 1	54
Jonah iii. 10	199	John i. 18	132
Matt. v. 17	54	ii. 1–11	47
vi. 11	42	iii. 16, xvii. 9	67
vii. 11	16	iii. 35	132
vii. 28, 29	133	vi. 46, 65	132
x. 20	161	vii. 17	183
x. 39	202	vii. 20–27	132
xi. 25–27	132	viii. 13	132
xii. 32	166	x. 15	132
xviii. 18	161	x. 30	146
xviii. 19, 20	162	xi. 9	132
xxi. 22	132	xiii. 3	132
xxii. 21	33	xiv. 2	226
xxiv. 36	132	xiv. 8, 9	8
xxv. 31–46	28	xiv. 9	146

	PAGE
John xiv. 10	151
xiv. 16, 17, 26	17 f.
xv. 26	17
xvi. 7	17
xvi. 23	132
xx. 1, 19	54
xx. 23	161
Acts i. 8	29
ii. 46	42
ix. 1, 6	161
x. 38	151
xiii. 48	173
xx. 7	54
xxvi. 9	166
Rom. iii. 25	146
vii. 7–25	167
viii. 19–23	192
viii. 34	18
xii. 5	161
xii. 19	209
xiii. 13	47
1 Cor. i. 21	90 f.
ii. 14	125
v. 11	47
vi. 15	161
ix. 7–14	117
xi. 23–26	37
1 Cor. xii. 12	161
xii. 24, 25	162
xii. 26	161
xiii. 9	190
xvi. 2	54
2 Cor. iv. 11	76
v. 16	8
Gal. v. 21	47
Eph. i. 22	31
v. 4	110
v. 18	47
v. 23	31
v. 25–33	141
v. 30	161
vi. 24	181
Col. i. 24	161
1 Thess. v. 7	47
1 Tim. i. 13	165
Heb. ii. 14	84
iv. 9	55
v. 2	87 f.
ix. 5	146
1 Pet. iv. 3	47
2 Pet. i. 20, 21	139
1 John ii. 1	17 f.
3 John 5–8, 10, 11	118 f.
Rev. i. 10	55

School of Theology
at Claremont

Richard Clay & Sons, Limited, London and Bungay.

HEOLOGY LIBRARY
LAREMONT, CALIF.
A1865

	PAGE		PAGE
John xiv. 10	151	1 Cor. xii. 12	161
xiv. 16, 17, 26	17 f.	xii. 24, 25	162
xv. 26	17	xii. 26	161
xvi. 7	17	xiii. 9	190
xvi. 23	132	xvi. 2	54
xx. 1, 19	54	2 Cor. iv. 11	76
xx. 23	161	v. 16	8
Acts i. 8	29	Gal. v. 21	47
ii. 46	42	Eph. i. 22	31
ix. 1, 6	161	v. 4	110
x. 38	151	v. 18	47
xiii. 48	173	v. 23	31
xx. 7	54	v. 25–33	141
xxvi. 9	166	v. 30	161
Rom. iii. 25	146	vi. 24	181
vii. 7–25	167	Col. i. 24	161
viii. 19–23	192	1 Thess. v. 7.	47
viii. 34	18	1 Tim. i. 13	165
xii. 5	161	Heb. ii. 14	84
xii. 19	209	iv. 9	55
xiii. 13	47	v. 2	87 f.
1 Cor. i. 21	90 f.	ix. 5	146
ii. 14	125	1 Pet. iv. 3	47
v. 11	47	2 Pet. i. 20, 21	139
vi. 15	161	1 John ii. 1.	17 f.
ix. 7–14	117	3 John 5–8, 10, 11	118 f.
xi. 23–26	37	Rev. i. 10	55

School of Theology
at Claremont

Richard Clay & Sons, Limited, London and Bungay.

THEOLOGY LIBRARY
CLAREMONT, CALIF.

BR96 .S6
Smith, David, 1866-1932.
Christian counsel.

BR
96
S6

Smith, David, 1866-1932.
Christian counsel. London, New York, Hodder and Stoughton [19--]
xiii, 236p. 21cm.

1. Theology--Miscellanea. I. Title.

CCSC/mmb

711863